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Front cover: Second Nature's new Milbourne Partridge Grey Shaker kitchen is a modern neutral that will stand the test of time, adapting effortlessly to both contemporary and classic schemes. See p.74

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Well summer is here – apparently – and despite the weather at the time of writing, this issue of Your Build includes features focusing on maximising light in your project and connecting with the outdoors, plus we have loads of advice to help you with your garden and landscaping ambitions.

'Bringing the outside in' could be considered an overused phrase when discussing bi-folds, folding / sliding and French doors, but there's no escaping the fact that's exactly what they do. They enable homeowners to connect with their gardens and achieve living spaces that integrate with the outdoors. With manufacturers now offering options for wider-span openings and lower profile frames, the results that can be achieved have reached new levels. We have a number of articles focusing on patio doors, bi-folds, French doors and widespan glazing, including our Q&A with John Shaw of Climadoor (p.20); JELD-WEN's advice on choosing the right patio doors for your project (p.44); plus Thomas Hagen of Internorm's article discussing how glazing has developed to meet self-builders' needs (p.54). As Thomas explains: "Linking the inside with the outside is a current trend and for this, lift-sliding doors are ideal. Extra large sizes and special solutions extend the room beyond its real borders and thereby create a new sense of space. With this, a trend towards the use of large frameless glass architecture to create open, bright living environments is also being seen."

In this issue, property expert Kate Faulkner, on behalf of NSBRC, looks at the renovation market and asks if it's still possible to buy a property and renovate it for profit. As Kate explains: "At the moment, it's not good to rely on natural property price growth to help you recover money from the changes you made, it is important you build profit in from the start." Read Kate's full article and conclusions on p.24.

Elsewhere in this issue we have advice and guidance on laying your foundations (p.36); underfloor heating (p.50); security (p.66); kitchens (p.74) and bathrooms (p.84). So read on for all this and much, much more. Enjoy the issue!

Matt Downs, Editor

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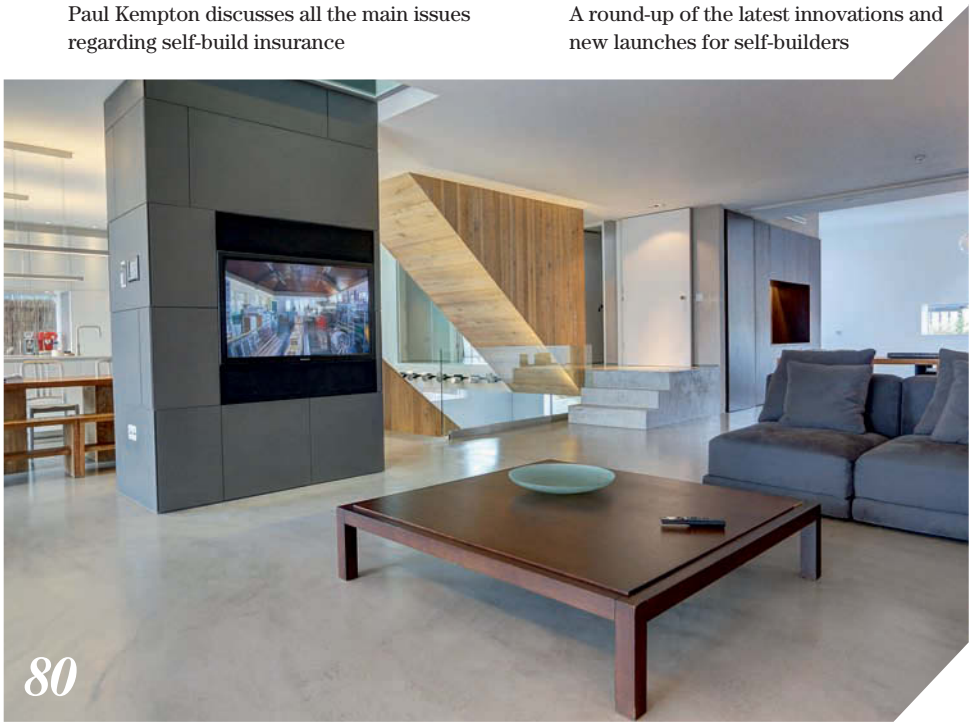

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Self-build mortgages: The key questions

By Rachel Pyne, group sales director, BuildStore

By its very nature, arranging a self-build mortgage naturally throws up questions. In this article I will share the most frequently asked questions put forward to our specialist advisers.

Will I need a lot of savings to build my own house?

Not necessarily, although your choice of build 'fabric' can dictate whether you need to fund production in advance, for example with timber frame builds. With an advance-stage mortgage arrangement such as BuildStore's Accelerator, you can start your build with a relatively small deposit and borrow up to 90 per cent of your land costs and up to 90 per cent of your build costs. If you do have savings or access to other cash however, then you may prefer to use an arrears stage payment mortgage.

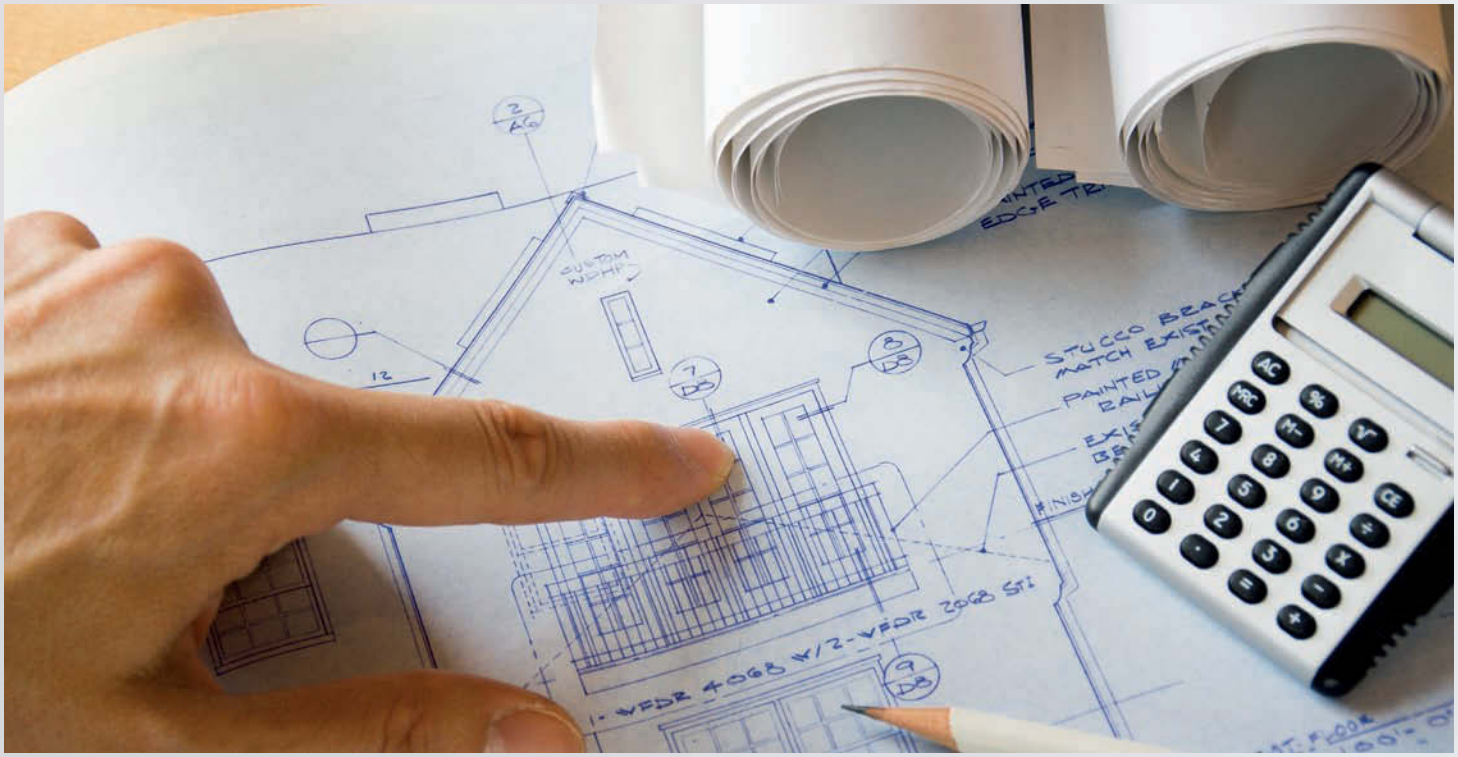
Will I have to sell my current house before my new home is ready?

This will depend on how you wish to finance your build and how much cash you have in savings. If you choose an arrears stage payment mortgage then you will need sufficient money for a deposit of between 15 and 25 per cent of the land cost, as well as money to pay for the materials and labour for the early stages of the build. If you do not have sufficient savings then you may decide to sell your current house to release equity before starting your new project.

If you don't want to sell your existing house and move into temporary accommodation before your new build is complete, then BuildStore's Accelerator scheme may be right for you. Receiving your stage payments in advance during the project will ensure that cash flow is not an issue during the build so you can continue living in your current house until you are ready to move.

Is there only one type of mortgage available for self-building?

There are in fact two types of self-build mortgage available from specialist lenders. An arrears based mortgage releases funds at each stage completion, requiring the self-builder to initially provide funding for works, whereas an advance-stage 'Accelerator' mortgage releases funds at the beginning of each stage allowing for enhanced cash flow and budgeting benefits. By talking to a specialist financial adviser, you will be able to ►



ascertain the best product for your individual requirements.

How can I be ready to buy my ideal plot of land as soon as it becomes available?

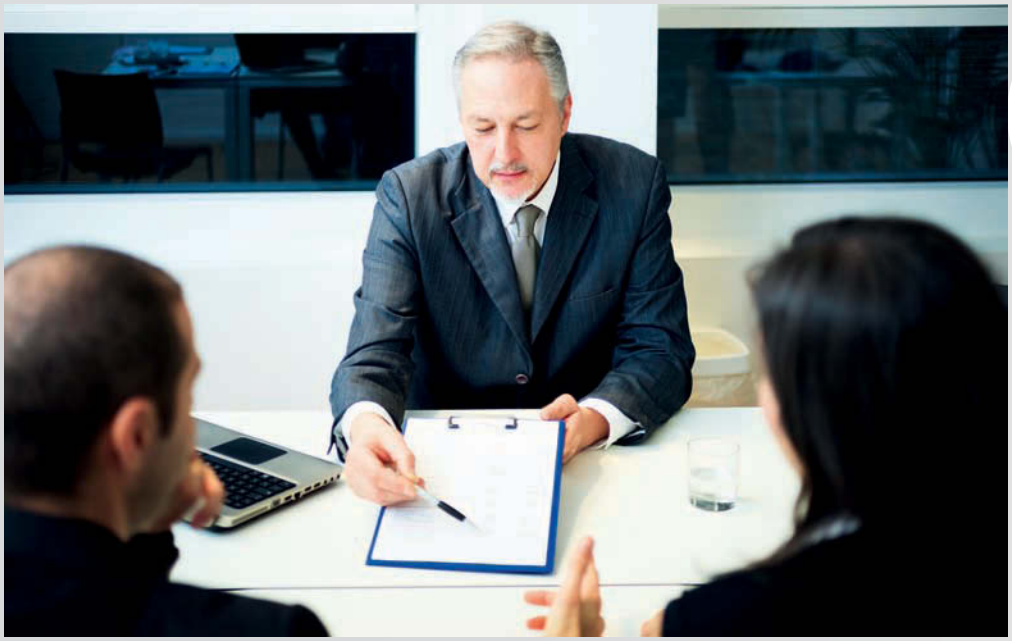
Before you have found your land, it is strongly advised that you talk to a mortgage adviser to explore the various options for financing your project and work out how much you can borrow based on your current finances and commitments. Your existing mortgage will be reviewed and, if applicable, a remortgage with a cash drawdown facility will be arranged to make it easier to put an offer on a plot as soon as it becomes available.

Alternatively, the BuildStore Accelerator Mortgage Scheme will also lend money on land that has Outline Planning Permission compared to some lenders that will only lend on land with detailed planning permission (which can take months to arrange and restrict the plot opportunities you have).

What is the position on stamp duty?

One area where you get better value is in stamp duty as you only pay this based on the purchase price of the plot and not on the value of the completed house. You are exempt from paying stamp duty if the cost of your plot is less than £125,000.

Compared to buying a completed property, it is estimated that self built homes are worth on average 25-30 per cent more on completion than they cost to build.



Rachel Pyne

Founded in 1998, BuildStore is the UK's leading provider of homebuilding finance and works with a panel of exclusive lenders to provide the most appropriate, individual self-build financial solution.

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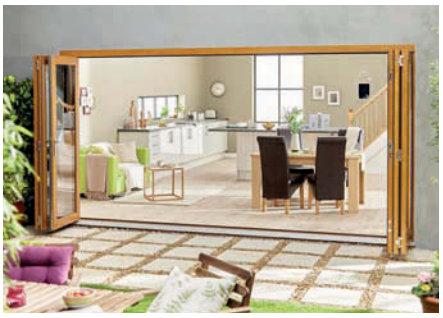

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Self-build INSURANCE: Getting it right!

By Paul Kempton, managing director of Self-Build Zone

For many, a self-build will be the biggest investment of their lives, and because of this it is important to make sure you take the right steps to protect your investment. Suffering a claim during your project can be devastating. In order to minimise your exposure to loss, it is important that you consider the following tips to ensure you get the insurance side of your project right first time.

When should I take out Site Insurance?

You become responsible for insuring your plot at exchange of contracts. Site Insurance should be taken out at this point to cover your liabilities until the construction works begin, at which point the main body of the policy will come into force.

If works are not going to start for a while, you should take out Land Owners' Liability to cover your Public Liability exposure until works start, at which point Site Insurance should be arranged.

If there is an existing structure, Site Insurance should be put in place for when contracts have been exchanged. If works are not starting for a while you should arrange Unoccupied Buildings Insurance until the works start, at which time Site Insurance should be purchased.

I'm doing work to my own home – does my existing Home Insurance cover me?

Many home insurers specifically exclude cover on properties undergoing renovation, alteration, extension or conversion. It is really worrying that over half of the people that we talk to do not realise this and leave themselves and their largest asset exposed.

You must inform your home insurer prior to any works starting to determine their stance. A Home insurance policy will not necessarily cover any of the new works and materials if, for example, they are stolen or destroyed by fire. Home insurance may exclude any loss, damage or liability arising out of the activities of contractors working at or on the premises.

Home insurance does not provide you with both Public and Employers' liability cover where you are doing building work to your home and your builder's Public Liability policy isn't necessarily adequate as it will only cover them for their negligence, which can be costly and time-consuming to prove.

A Site Insurance policy will act as an interim policy, covering – amongst other things – the existing structure and new works during the course of the project. Once the work is completed you should reinstate your buildings insurance cover. If you are keeping your household contents in the property during the course of work, you should arrange separate contents cover as Site Insurance will not cover them.

A Site Insurance policy can provide Consequential Damage Cover for existing structures on site. This means that you are covered if the existing structure is damaged by new works. Your home insurance may not cover this.

> *Effectively you are* **acting as** *the Main Contractor*

Is Site Insurance a legal requirement?

It is not a legal requirement to have Site Insurance but you must, by law, have a minimum of £5million Employers' Liability cover if you are directly employing people to work on your site. This is included within a Site Insurance policy as standard, usually at a minimum of £10million.

My sub-contractors / contractors have their own insurance – Do I still need Site Insurance?

You should always check with any contractor and obtain proof that they have their own insurance to check what it covers them for. It is likely that most will only have Public Liability – this will not cover your materials or new works if they are stolen or damaged.

Where you are not using a Main Contractor and are individually contracting tradespeople to do the work, you are responsible for insuring the new works and materials and Site Insurance is essential.

Do I still need Site Insurance if I'm using a Main Contractor?

If you are contracting one builder to carry out all the works then the contract should state that they are responsible for insuring the whole project from the moment they start excavation right up to project completion. Bear in mind that if a serious loss did occur, your builder might not be in any ►

> *Contracts do not* ***solve all*** *the problems*

financially better state than you are to deal with it. Your builder isn't an insurance expert. They may say they are 'fully insured', but the chances are they only have Public Liability which only covers them in the event they cause damage or injury to a third party following a negligent act. Public Liability doesn't cover issues like storm damage, fire, theft of materials and plant, arson, etc. – essentially all the things you need covered!

Ideally your Main Contractor should have a Contractors All Risks insurance policy including Public and Employers' Liability. Contractors All Risks will cover the new works against loss or damage during the construction period. Check that it's in force. If the renewal date falls during the project make sure it's renewed on time and you get a copy of the documents. It's important to check the limit on the policy is sufficient to cover the full reinstatement cost of the contract too! If you have any doubts, then organise some Site Insurance yourself.

If the Main Contractor goes bust or their contract ceases before the end of the build, the responsibility to insure the project reverts back to you – you will need to arrange Site Insurance if this happens.

What if I'm managing the Tradespeople myself?

If you are managing the build as well as contracting different trades, you still need to establish formal contracts with every Professional, Trade and Main Supplier. The contract should state that the trades must carry insurance and in this instance it will only be Public Liability because you still want to be able to pursue them if they have been negligent. Effectively you are acting as the main contractor, taking on a management element, organising materials, hiring plant and assuming responsibility. Site Insurance in this case is essential and covers the works, temporary works, materials, Public Liability, Employer's Liability, plant, tools and equipment and a caravan you may be living in.

Why do I need Contracts?

Construction projects can be complex affairs, with a variety of different trades working on the site, and a variety of risks which can range from unforeseen ground conditions to bad weather and non-availability of materials or equipment.

Contracts do not solve all the problems; they provide a framework for dealings between the participants and they help to identify how risks are allocated and what to do if things go wrong.

Contracts are important:

To record the commercial terms agreed by the parties;
To provide certainty;
To provide a framework for dealing with issues that might arise during the life of the contracts (changes, unforeseen problems etc.);
To provide a method of resolving disputes.

A contract will deal with a whole range of issues: scope of work, price and payment terms, variations, insurance, contract duration and completion date, post-completion liability, termination and dispute resolution ■

Paul Kempton

Paul Kempton is the managing director of Sennocke International Insurance Services Ltd which includes the trading styles Self-Build Zone and Build-Zone. Paul has over 40 years of experience in insurance including Lloyd's markets, leading to the decision to start his own insurance brokerage. Sennocke has been operating for 24 years with strong market reputations in the Commercial, Building and Personal lines Insurance markets.

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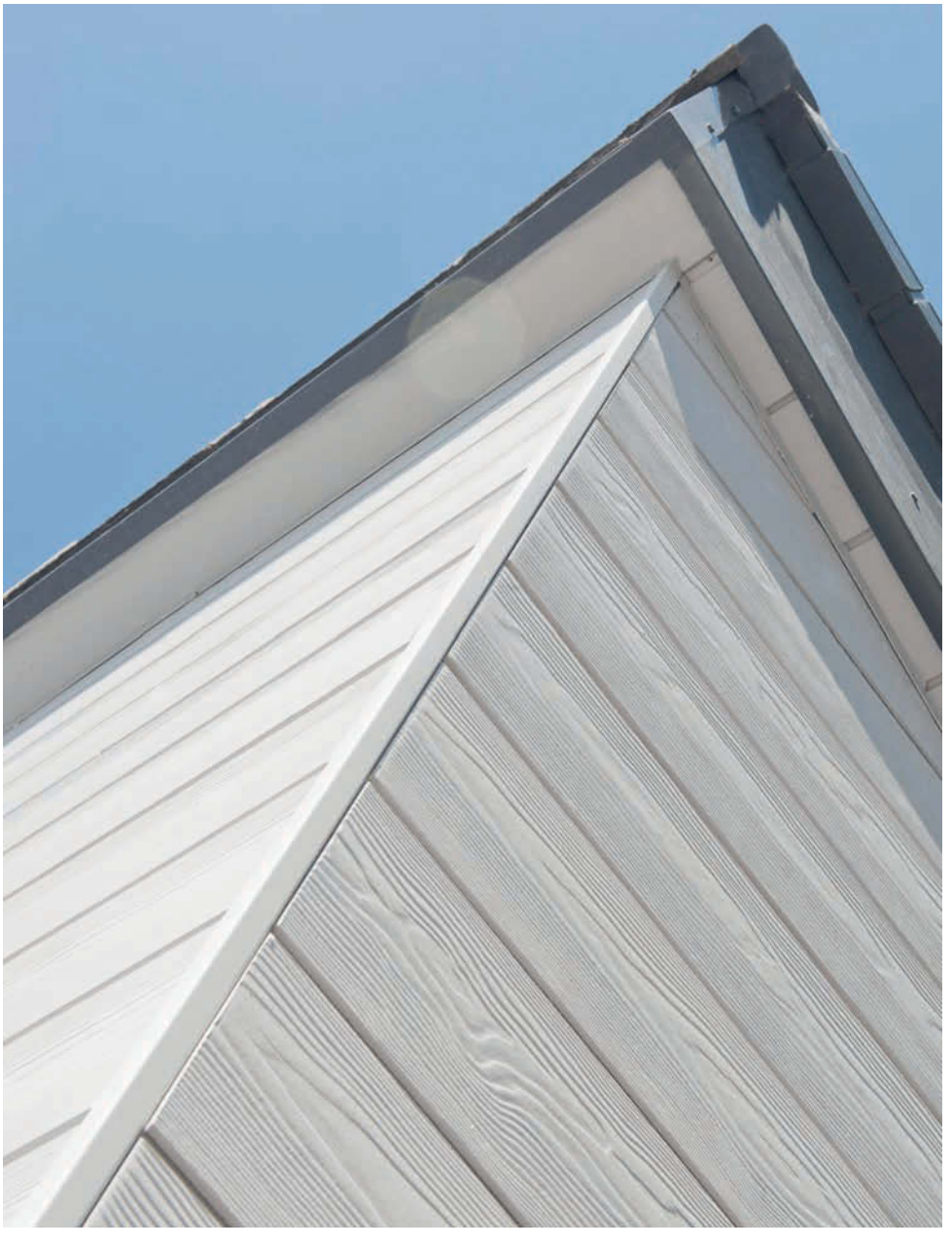
Creating Homes as unique as you

Any external cladding material that has the ability to turn the ordinary into something extraordinary is always going to appeal to self builders and home owners. Here, Marley Eternit looks at why their latest innovation in fibre cement weatherboard can help create homes that do just that.

Marley Eternit's fibre cement materials have been used by some of the leading UK architects and housebuilders when they are looking for a low maintenance facade with aesthetic appeal. However, it's not just housebuilders and architects that have recognised the ability of Cedral to create something extraordinary. More self builders and homeowners are choosing fibre cement weatherboard to add kerb appeal and an element of individuality to their properties.

Marley Eternit has responded to this demand with its new product innovations which continue to push the boundaries of design and performance.



Contemporary Appeal

The most recent addition, Cedral Click, became the UK's first fibre cement tongue and groove product where the planks fit together flush.

Self builders and homeowners welcomed this new application because it offered them a contemporary take on the traditional style of Cedral Lap, where the planks overlap – but with the same performance benefits. Cedral Click is offered in 7 popular colours with more available as made to order.

EXTENDED CHOICE:

Cedral Click
The UK's first and only fibre cement tongue and groove cladding where the planks are fitted together flush, creating a striking modern facade.

Available in 7 of our most popular lap colours.

Cedral Lap
The planks overlap when installed creating a traditional, clapper-board aesthetic.

Click 'n Fit

The range is fitted with a simple Click Clip System that makes it a straightforward installation. A range of complementary, colour co-ordinated aluminium trims are available to create a personalised, professional finish. The planks are 12mm x 186mm x 3600mm and available from stockists across the UK.

Low maintenance

One of the most enduring features of the Cedral fibre cement range is that they offer a long-term low maintenance solution.

That means customers who choose Cedral avoid the issues associated with having to continually re-paint exterior woodwork, especially on vulnerable areas such as window surrounds and roofline – the Cedral range can be used anywhere that you would use timber or PVCu.

Cedral protects against harsh weather conditions, preventing rain or moisture reaching the building substrate. This protects it from the damaging effects of continual wetting and drying action.

For existing properties, adding insulation to the exterior wall and then over cladding with Cedral is an excellent way to upgrade thermal performance without losing valuable living space. Plus, it looks great and has the added advantage of making the property look like new!

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5. Stands up to the harshest weather conditions requiring no routine maintenance
6. An installed life expectancy of at least 50 years
7. Used in the same way as timber or PVCu
8. Resistant to rot and immune to attack by pests and insects.

In terms of design, we have seen Cedral Click used particularly effectively when installed vertically, which creates an attractive contemporary design. Equally, it looks great when fixed in a more traditional horizontal arrangement.

Self builders and homeowners are embracing the challenge of creating visually outstanding properties that offer long term low maintenance, making fibre cement Cedral cladding the ideal choice. The fact that there is now a choice between traditional or contemporary ranges makes it even more relevant to today's market.

For a copy of the easy to follow 'How to' guide, and more inspirational images for Cedral Click, go to: **www.marleyeternit.co.uk/cedral** or call ME on 01283 722588.

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Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th June 2015.
Adding Space... Adding Value!

A great time to attend The National Self Build & Renovation Centre (NSBRC), is during one of the NSBRC's Shows, when the Centre really comes to life. June sees 'The BIG Home Improvement Show' return for its second year. All about adding space and value to our existing homes, this packed two-day event focuses on major home improvement projects such as extensions, loft or basement conversions and heating upgrades.

Free expert advice

Renowned for the quality of its expert presentations and relaxed, open approach, the NSBRC has brought together an unrivalled line-up of experts that include Architects, Project Managers, Designers, Planners and Eco consultants – all of whom are on hand to offer their guidance and advice. If you're planning a major project, or are simply after a second opinion before making a key purchase, bring your plans and sketches along to the show and take advantage of the free one-to-one sessions. The NSBRC's own expert team will be on hand to take you on guided tours of our fantastic Life Size Renovation House and Self Build Journeys – answering your questions along the way.

Free seminars

18 free seminars will be spread across three theatres each day exploring everything from budgeting, plot finding, the latest Building Regulations and planning news.

The 'Build It Theatre' will feature keynote speakers, discussing current self-build & renovation developments, including the finance specialists Buildstore, Property expert Kate Faulkner and TV Presenter & Interior Designer Linda Barker.

The 'Plotsearch Theatre' offers presentations from dozens of exhibitors showing the very latest technologies and building systems whilst the team will also share their top tips for sourcing tradespeople and buying materials. Each day the latest products and technologies will be put through their paces in the 'Live Demonstration' Arena.

Checkatrade & Linda Barker

This year the NSBRC has teamed up with Checkatrade.com, who are sponsoring the show and the Renovation House. Checkatrade prides itself on being the original consumer champion and there is a strong synergy with the work that the NSBRC does in supporting people with their projects. Checkatrade ambassador, TV Presenter and Interior Designer, Linda Barker, will be on hand to open the show, meet visitors and offer advice.

Kate Faulkner & The Property Clinic

Kate Faulkner is one of the UK's leading property experts. Kate provides independent up to date and individual advice on how to buy, sell, rent, invest, renovate, maintain or build a property. She does this via a free service called Propertycheckists.co.uk and a paid for advice service, which includes a comprehensive 'how to' guide.

Kate will be at the Show with her 'Property Clinic' which features a plethora of industry experts and associations offering free advice to help you with your project.

"I'm really looking forward to being at the Big Home Improvement show in June. It'll be my first time at the show and I know it's going to be somewhere that is going to be both inspirational and hugely practical"

Linda Barker, Interior Designer and Checkatrade ambassador

Other Show highlights:

The Dulux Design Service will be offering free practical interior design advice in an Interior Design Advice Clinic. It is an opportunity for anyone with an interior build or renovation project to get inspiration and expert advice from a Dulux designer. No matter how big or small the project, they'll be on hand to answer interior design queries and inspire visitors along the way.

If you're planning some big changes to your home, whether it's an extension, loft conversion, or remodelling, BuildStore can find the right finance for you. As the UK's leading provider of homebuilding finance, they offer a range of funding solutions from all of the leading lenders, as well as exclusive products not available elsewhere. Their specialist advisers can look at your individual circumstances and recommend the most cost effective solution for project.

Expert Alley: For those wishing to learn more about issues such as planning, Building Regulations, dispute resolution and insurance drop-in for free consultations with a host of respected industry associations and experts.

The BIG Home Improvement Show is easy to get to with the NSBRC located right on Junction 16 of the M4 and parking is plentiful and FREE!

The BIG Home Improvement Show is on Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th June 2015 and FREE tickets are available through www.nsbrc.co.uk Quote code: Magazine

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Question Time
Opening up:
Bi-folds, external folding & French doors

Your Build talks all things doors with Climadoor's MD John Shaw

YB: Can you give us a bit of background about Climadoor and the sorts of products you offer?
Climadoor, as a brand, has been growing its market share over the last two to three years. We started with a range of external solid oak bifold doors, and now we offer a wide range of internal and external folding and French doors. We are proud to showcase some unique design features which make us stand out from the rest.

YB: What are the key considerations self-builders and renovators should make when specifying internal and external bi-fold and French doors?
My personal advice, which I always strongly encourage all our customers to do, is work around the standard structural opening sizes first. This is crucial in achieving great looks, but also at the right price. We offer the very best in optimum product performance and a wide range of cost-effective solutions for all budgets.

YB: What size of openings can be achieved with your systems?
We offer a variety of sizes, such as:
- Our top hung External bifolds range from 1800mm 3 door systems, right through to 4800mm wide 6 door systems;
- Our top hung Internal bifold doors range from as small as 3 door 1670mm wide sets, right up to 4650mm wide 6 door sets for those looking for a really wide open look.
- External French doors range from 1200mm wide through to 3000mm wide solutions with fixed side panels in standard module sizes.
- Internal French doors range from 1220mm wide up to 1770mm wide.
- Our unique internal folding French doors systems, with folding sidelights range from 1680 up to 2840mm. These have the benefit of central opening French doors, but with the ability to fold the doors completely back against the wall to fully open up the space.

YB: What sort of maintenance is required for your range of doors and finishes?
As with all good quality products basic maintenance is low. As long as you have followed the fitting instructions and installed the product properly our product will last many years, with just a bit of light greasing of the hardware components every so often. Additionally, we offer a ten year manufacturing defects guarantees and decent finish guarantees on our external products too.

YB: The door market is extremely competitive with a number of manufacturers offering a variety of options. What do you feel separates Climadoor's systems from the rest?
We have the widest choice on offer to customers at the moment, all at very affordable prices. This, coupled with great levels of thermal performance on our external folding doors – untouched by other timber folding door manufacturers using double glazed units – and the finish quality of both our interior and exterior doors has given other competitors a real wake up call. The key though, as with most products nowadays, is providing superior quality at very realistic prices – which happens to be our company tag line. All of our products are also delivered to customers' doorsteps within five working days.

YB: "Bringing the outside in" is a trend on projects, and when done properly can achieve great results. What are the pitfalls to avoid when looking to achieve this?
I think there are a number of areas people need to consider. For example:
- Make sure the lintels specified are suitable.
- Think about accessibility….(eg: we have witnessed architect drawings with 2 plus 2 bifold door arrangements, which looked good on paper, but in reality the bifolds could only be accessed and locked from one side).
- Always consider having a daily access door that can be used without having to fold open doors. Inspect your floor levels carefully. Eg: what height to install your lintel to ensure any step at the sill is minimised, or eradicated completely.
- Finally, check your final furniture layout; it's no good having a daily access door that will be positioned behind a table for instance, where direct access may be blocked.

YB: There has been much debate about the benefits of triple glazing with some calling it a sales tool for manufacturers and window companies. Are there any real benefits in terms of noise reduction or ability to achieve better U-Values?
Yes, this has been a subject of discussion for some time now. Certainly thicker glass units, with three panes of glass will always give better noise reduction and we believe this is where triple glazing actually scores. But, why spend the

money on triple glazing purely for thermal performance? U-Values on doors have been improving significantly in recent years, and our double glazed whole product U-Values of down to 1.3w/m²K have been unsurpassed by other manufacturers. This offers the end customer the benefits of reduced energy bills without spending silly money on triple glazed products.

YB: Self-builders are having to build to ever-tightening regulations, how does your range of products perform in relation to the latest Building Regs?
All of our products either meet or surpass current building regulations. We strive to be ahead of the game, looking at potential future regulation changes, and ensuring we have the latest design solutions on offer.

YB: You offer a quick turnaround on deliveries, this must really help customers on projects…
It certainly does. They don't have to worry about ordering products six to 12 weeks in front of their build schedule like with made to measure timber, PVC and some aluminium products. Our customers can simply reserve their doors, and we will deliver the week before they need them. Our promise is a prompt delivery within five working days to most UK mainland locations. Recently, we have a seen a surge of popularity even abroad, like South of France and in those cases, deliveries may take a bit longer of course.

YB: Security is high on the list of any homeowner's list of priorities. How have you been able to achieve the balance between aesthetics and security?
Working with some of the best hardware suppliers in the UK, our 54mm external folding door sets have the added benefit of being fitted with Secured by Design running gear from Brio UK. Also all of our external French and folding doors are fitted with multipoint locks as standard. Certainly aesthetics is the key, as well as security and all our 54mm products have the added benefit of slim stiles and rails to maximise glass unit sizes for great views.

YB: CLIMADOOR's products must have been used on some interesting projects over the years, can you let us know about some of the more intriguing requests?
Well, recently we have received a call from an eccentric English couple who have decided to retire and move to Southern Ireland in the next month or so. With the GB pound sterling being as strong as it is now, they managed to purchase an estate comprising of five derelict farm properties plus adjacent land of course, all at a bargain price. The living and accommodation quarters are in serious need of modernisation, so they asked our advice with regards to installing Climadoor products. A very interesting project indeed.

YB: What do you feel will be next big developments in the door market?
With open-plan living being towards the top of the agenda for a lot of self-build and design conscious customers, I see increasing use of internal and external bifold doors installations. I also notice there is a slight move from traditional architects and major builders work of traditional internal "moulded doors" towards a higher quality oak and walnut door alternative. Externally, there will be a continuing shift towards better thermal performance levels as part of the Green agenda.

www.climadoor.co.uk

Preparing for your extension

With the trend for improving rather than moving still on the rise, Sophie Davis, of GPML Construction, offers advice on how to get your extension right

There are many options that may be available to extend your home, this could be in the form or a single storey or two storey rear extension, a single storey of two storey side extension, a loft conversion or even a basement in some cases.

There are lots of reasons to extend your home, whether you want to create more space for a growing family, add value to your home or you just love the area in which you live. So if you are looking at the options for extending, what do you need to think about in advance?

Key points to consider:

- Before you plan your extension, it's a good idea to research your area to find out what renovations are popular and what has been permitted. Every street has a ceiling value so don't overdevelop if you want to see a good return on your investment, or plan to sell in the not too distance future.
- Investigate whether you need full planning permission or whether the work can be undertaken under permitted development. The best place to start with this is to look at your local council website under the planning section or call and speak with them for some advice.
- Decide what it is that you want to gain from the additional space and what is most important to you. Is it additional bedroom(s) that are needed? an additional bathroom? or is it more living space that you require? It may be a combination of all of these or others, but it is good to have at least an idea of what it is that you actually need before you involve or seek the advice of professionals, and they can then guide you on what is achievable.
- Work out what budget you have available for the project. If you need to borrow the money in the form of a mortgage or another finance route then speak to the relevant parties and find out what you may be able to obtain and what the repayments will be.

So if you have considered all of the above and want to move forward, what are the next steps?

This is when it is time to bring the professionals in, whether that be in the form of an architectural firm or a construction company you will need someone to come and view the property and discuss your ideas. They should be able to advise you on what type of permission will be required, whether your ideas are achievable and most importantly, whether your budget is in the correct ball park for the work you want to undertake, or whether the work will need to be scaled back.

There are many architectural and construction companies in the market to choose from. When you are in the process of selecting a company it is important to do your research. Whether you are appointing an architect directly just to do the drawing work, or as part of a construction company who can undertake the whole project, some key points to consider are:

- Research the company / companies.
- Obtain references for their previous clients.
- View one or two or their previous projects if they will permit you to.
- Try to gain a clear understanding of their costs and timescales should they undertake the work, and make sure their proposal covers everything you have asked for.
- Ensure you engage with more than one company initially to get a cost comparison.

Once you have selected a company to work with and your drawings are complete, make sure you are happy with them before signing them off to submit to the council for the relevant permission / certificate. Dependent on the type of permission you have to apply for, there will then be a period whilst the council consider your application and this varies considerably for different types of applications. Your appointed architect / construction company will be able to provide accurate timescales for this so that you know exactly what to expect. Hopefully at the end of that period you will have the permission required and be one step closer to starting your extension.

So whether you have been planning your extension for many years to create your dream home, or whether you have made the decision relatively quickly, it is important to consider as much information in advance of making a final decision as possible. As with any project, the more planning and thought that goes in to it in the early stages, the smoother the journey will be ■

Contact Details

At GPML Construction, extensions of all sizes and scopes are a key area of their business and their expertise means they can offer a complete solution from conception to completion

T: 0800 046 0266

W: www.gpmlconstruction.co.uk

GPMLConstruction

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GPML Construction is a leading provider of building and maintenance solutions to customers in London and across the South East.

Established in 1990, the company has a long track record in meeting the demands of projects with varying size and scope for extensions, loft conversions, basements, refurbishments and new builds.

A proven, flexible service means that the company can help develop a project from conception to completion.

Can you still buy a property and renovate it for profit?

In this, the first of a series of articles by the NSBRC, property expert Kate Faulkner asks, 'in today's property market, can home improvements still add value to a home?'

We are living in strange times when it comes to the property market. Prior to 2004, property prices could almost be 'guaranteed' on average to double every ten years even without you lifting a finger. In London in 1999 you could have bought a property that just one year later would be worth between 30-40 per cent more. It took the rest of the UK until 2003 to see similar huge annual growth when property prices went up by 20-30 per cent. And it's these kind of increases which helped boost people's interest in property as an investment.

With this increased interest came programmes such as Property Ladder on Channel 4 which seemed to overnight create an army of buyers wanting to buy a property at a discount, do it up in a few months and make their fortune. Because the market was working in their favour, many of them did very well.

But today's market is very different. Firstly, for the first time I can remember, London is not tipped to have the greatest property price growth potential. Savills estimate natural house price growth for the area to be (on average) 10 per cent over the next five years. In comparison both the South East and East of England are expected to increase by 25 per cent, especially in places such as Cambridge which have a close proximity to London, a growing economy and plenty of money pouring into upgrading the City Centre and even a new train station.

Another feature of the property market since the Credit Crunch is the huge variations we are now seeing in property price changes. Some areas such as London and Cambridge have recovered way beyond the market heights back in 2007/8, while others such as Liverpool are 28 per cent lower today than they were before the Crunch hit.

So what do these new trends mean if you are looking to improve your home? Can you still buy a property and renovate for profit? Will you get the money back you spend? And if you are going to live in the home for a long time – do price trends matter?

The reality is whether home improvements add value or not depends on what's happening in your local market for the property you are looking to upgrade. At the moment, it's not good to rely on natural property price growth to help you recover money from the changes you made, it is important you build profit in from the start.

In the past you could have bought a property which needed a bit of painting and decorating, a new bathroom and kitchen and then sell it on at a profit. Part of this was from natural house price growth, part was from buyers being happy to pay a premium for a home they could move straight into.

Unfortunately this is unlikely to work anymore. To make the 20 per cent profit you should be aiming for from home improvements, you are

Kate Faulkner

Kate Faulkner is one of the UK's leading property experts, regularly appearing on National TV & Radio and provides advice to consumers via www.property checklists.co.uk

There will be a number of experts available to answer your renovation queries at The BIG Home Improvement Show, held at the NSBRC in Swindon, on the 13th & 14th June

much more likely to have to buy a property for cash which is unmortgageable, upgrade it and then sell it back on the open market. The kind of properties you need to consider are likely to be fire damaged, have subsidence which can be fixed for good, are empty for a long period of time or have a lease which needs to be extended. And to make sure this works for you, especially if you haven't done it before, you will need to have the right level of expertise from quality trades people, legal experts and a qualified Chartered Surveyor (RICS).

If, however, you are improving a property for yourself, then you can take a bit more time and consider which home improvements might pay for themselves in the longer term, or even earn you a little more equity when finished.

Extra or fewer rooms?

Adding extra rooms to properties can add value, but in some cases it can detract too. For example, if an area has lots of larger four and five bed properties, but very few two and three beds and demand is for the latter, adding more bedrooms may not actually deliver extra value. It's important to remember that our nation is ageing and more people are divorcing, so our household size is getting smaller. As a result, 'bigger' isn't always necessarily 'better' in today's environment.

What might be better is to create the very best two or three bedroom property which is in great condition and has everything that the target market today is looking for. For example, bedrooms with ensuites, open plan living, a conservatory or room which 'brings the outside in', a well maintained exterior and manageable garden. In addition people who don't want the hassle of maintenance, may want to see a brand new boiler, heating system and electrics which abide by the latest safety regulations. It's these kind of improvements which can sometimes add real value and do so at not too much cost too.

But because of the localised nature of property prices and demand and supply, understanding what will add value requires chatting to local estate agents, especially those owned by or employing Chartered Surveyors who are trained to carry out professional valuations based on condition and the property's structure. This local knowledge can be invaluable in helping you add value to your home and avoiding costly mistakes.

Another way of adding value quickly and cost effectively to a property can be through converting a garage which is easy to do, and if that does add a bedroom, an office, a second sitting room or something that people will pay extra for, this can cost thousands to do but in the right locality, it can result in your home being worth tens of thousands of pounds more.

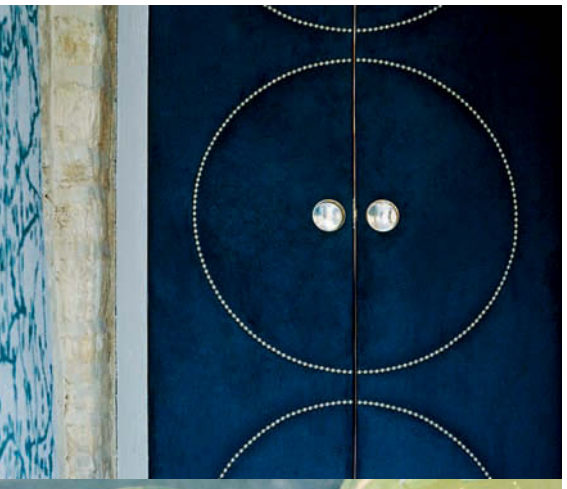
Many people are looking at loft conversions and basements to add extra space. In London where space is truly at a premium, these costly and time consuming improvements can work, but in other areas you may not see your money back for some years. If you are living in the property and need extra space, preferring to add it rather than move, then it may well still be worthwhile doing, as long as you know what the 'ceiling' price of your property is likely to be.

For example, if you have a property worth £150,000 and spend £30,000 on a loft conversion, it doesn't automatically mean your property will be worth £180,000. It might be that properties on your street wouldn't sell for more than £165,000. If this is the case, then you need to perhaps reconsider the amount you spend.

So, it is still possible to make money from adding value, but you need to consult with your local property experts and make sure you consider the ceiling price of a property in your road. Do be careful to choose a property to upgrade which is always in high demand and before you decide on changes you want to make, check first that it's what a future buyer would want and be willing to pay a premium for.

You can meet Kate in the 'Property Clinic' at the BIG Home Improvement Show, held at the National Self Build & Renovation Centre on 13 & 14 June ■

Free tickets can be ordered at www.nsbrc.co.uk quoting code: Magazine



DESIGNING FROM SCRATCH: How to bring the outside in

Niki Schäfer, director of Niki Schäfer Interior Design (www.nikischaferinteriordesign.co.uk), and member of the British Institute of Interior Design (BIID) shows us how to find inspiration to bring the outside in this summer and design a living space from scratch

Designing a room from scratch can seem a daunting process but I am here to tell you that there is nothing to fear about a 'blank canvas'.

A quick dip into Pinterest or Houzz, or even flicking through a few magazines will help you form a point of view on what you like and dislike. This immediately gets rid of the blank canvas trouble, but instead might leave you feeling pulled in different directions. Now you need to find a way to keep your style on track.

As with any project, it's advisable to start with a brief. Clearly writing down what you are looking to achieve will give you boundaries and keep you from being distracted by all things shiny – known as 'magpie syndrome'.

A brief is a simple list of uses such as sleeping, eating, storage, how many people will be using the room, at what times of the day and year and what considerations there are to bear in mind. These will vary hugely between users and rooms, but could include window details, light source, heating and any architectural details.

These considerations may immediately steer you in a style direction, which can be helpful, for instance if the room looks out on to a garden (we will be looking at this idea shortly). However, if the room has no identifiable features to begin with, it is up to you to create an initial 'bouncing board'. This could come from a piece of art you love, or a rug, lighting fitting or even a piece of crockery. Designing a room based around something you love will instantly make the entire room feel special. Choosing accent colours from a portrait, wood choices from the picture frame and neutral colours based on the art background will pull together a simple, but incredibly effective scheme. I find art is a better starting point than a final accessory.

The garden is a wonderful source of inspiration for your room's décor, but this doesn't mean the entire scheme needs to exude pastel pinks, lavender and foliage inspired themes. A contemporary and bold colour scheme will work just as well, as proven with a beautiful barn conversion project I designed last year.

Cotswold extension project

In November 2014 my company was engaged to design the interior for an oak frame extension on a Cotswold stone home. The structure of the extension cleverly reflected the shapes of the original house and the choice of oak leant itself well with the warmth of the stone. However, the clients did not want a country look – quite the opposite – their tastes are international, contemporary and quite bold. That being said, they travel frequently and wanted their home to feel comfortable and welcoming to return to. Especially for when friends and family are together – the room needed to host a party or two!

The connection between inside and out was essential, which led us to select a floor that was

Niki's company designed the interior of this oak frame extension on a Cotswold stone home where the clients did not want a country look, but a more contemporary, bold finish

ideal for both, creating a seamless transition. We chose a 600mm square grey porcelain, which had metallic streaks within it – which added warmth and worked well alongside the oak. It was suitable for indoor and outdoor use and was very heardwearing. It was drilled to allow tiny fibre optics to shine through and create a subtle lighting display around the perimeter of the room and into the courtyard. Tiles were sourced from Spacers in Maidenhead. (www.spacers-uk.com)

The textured grey theme continued with the upholstered furniture in the living area. This was accented with jewel colours in the cushions and a thick throw – a lush green colour taken from the perfect English grass lawn – a turquoise to create a link to travels, the sky and sea and a rich teal. The darker blue was picked up in a contemporary pattern on the rug. The rug was supplied by Bazaar Velvet on the New King's Road. (www.bazaarvelvet.com)

The teal blue, a macro-suede, was used in various pieces of furniture designed to help with concerns for the acoustics. A large glass room with stone floor needed to be 'cushioned' in order for sound not to bounce around excessively. The suede-covered double doors into the living room, cabinet doors for the bar and TV unit, all contributing to keeping the acoustics under control so the TV or high-end music system could be turned up during parties without fear of discomfort. I designed the furniture and it was built by Nicky Drummond Brady Furniture. (www.ndbfurniture.com)

Lighting was of great interest to the client; it needed to be fun, colourful and a part of the entertainment at gatherings. Colour changing LEDs were used in the roof lanterns as well as within the bar shelves and the spectacular chandelier over the dining table created movement and delight on all the reflective glass – including the dining table below it.

The glass dining table and acrylic coffee table added to the contemporary nature of the room and allowed the room to flow visually into the garden beyond, rather than being blocked by wood or metal. I designed the coffee table with Inplas and the table came from Roche Bobois.

Blinds were a fundamental part of the design in order to control heat and also help with acoustics. We chose a pinoleum with a solar backing, which we placed internally to add to the shimmer and bounce light around. These were expertly designed and fitted by Grand Design Blinds. (www.granddesignblinds.com)

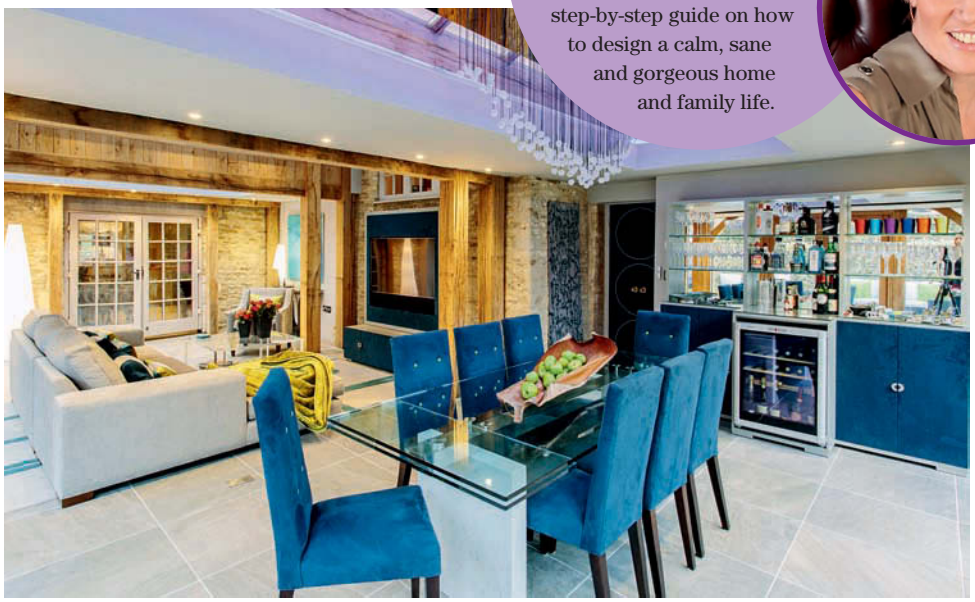
Art and accessories are the clients own; her keen sense of colour and style ensuring that every last detail was coordinated with the scheme – down to the salt and pepper pots and green apples in the bark. Even some of the crème de menthe was brought out to match the scheme. Or was that for the party?

For further details of Niki's work visit www.nsid.co.uk

Images courtesy of Clare West Photography www.clarewestphotography.co.uk

About the author

Niki appears frequently on TV and radio, and is the founding director of the inaugural Henley House & Garden Show. She is also the author of 'Creating Space,' a step-by-step guide on how to design a calm, sane and gorgeous home and family life.



Charlton and Jenrick adds to Infinity range

Charlton and Jenrick has made a new addition to its Infinity range of suites with the 880FL Rembrandt.
The surround is hand crafted from the finest Portuguese limestone, with carved details that set it apart from what Charlton and Jenrick call simple designs that have become the standard.
At the heart of the suite is the Infinity 880FL conventional flue gas fire. Pictured below with the black ceramic firebox liners and a fire basket, Charlton and Jenrick says the fireplace offers a regency feel to any living space.

W: www.charltonandjenrick.co.uk

Shaws of Darwin offers all shapes and sizes

The Belfast sink range from Shaws of Darwin is available in seven different sizes
The company was established in 1897 and handcrafts fireclay ceramic sinks in its factory in Darwen, Lancashire. The cache of 'Made In Britain' has always been a sign of quality, and Shaws says it is renowned for its experience in manufacturing a wide and varied range of durable, white glazed fireclay sinks. These can be used in a range of buildings, not least consumer homes, which is why the Belfast range is available in so many different sizes, as these are one of the most popular sinks in the company's portfolio.

The Belfast sink from Shaws of Darwin

These heavyweight sinks range from 460mm (18") to 915mm (36") wide, offering a sink for every application. As all of the sinks are manufactured in England, there are no added import or freight costs involved.
An example of the different benefits of sinks within the range can be seen between a Belfast and a Butler sink. A Belfast is compact with squarer features and has a traditional weir overflow at one end of the sink. It also has a 1½ inch waste outlet which gives the option for a slotted waste, a basket strainer waste or plug and chain. The Butler on the other hand does not have a weir overflow but a round overflow at the back of the sink, and includes a central 3½ inch waste outlet suitable for a basket strainer or waste disposer.
The Belfast is finished with a robust non-porous glaze which provides an extremely hardwearing surface, meaning it can withstand heavy use.

W: www.shawsofdarwin.com

Thinner's a winner with worktop surface

Agglomerate from Granite Transformations offers a beautiful but durable finish to kitchen worktops and wall surfaces.
The material is much thinner than other materials like granite, marble, engineered stone or solid synthetics but according to Granite Transformations, it equals or exceeds them in technical performance terms. To prove it, Granite Transformations offers a lifetime material warranty.
Thanks to the slimline width of agglomerate, it is at least two-thirds lighter than other materials, and fits on top of existing surfaces with ease. In addition, the easy-care surface does not require regular sealing and maintenance. It is certificated to be highly resistant to liquids, chemicals, scratches, impact and burns and because of its versatility, agglomerate can be applied over existing worktops and surfaces.

Granite Transformations' agglomerate

In addition to these benefits, Granite Transformations says the biggest appeal is that it will be measured-up, made off-site and installed by the local supplier, often in just one day. What's more, factory-trained fitters ensure a consistently high standard of workmanship and provide final proof that 'thinner's a winner'.

W: www.granitetransformations.co.uk

Fully integrated glazing

Internorm has launched its new PANORAMA HX300 (pictured) window glazing system, which can be integrated completely into brickwork and provide frameless glass architecture. Creating open bright living environments, the HX300 boasts slim glass joints to allow the inconspicuous transition of large glass areas, almost making the frame disappear completely into the façade to maximise views.

Additional glazing technology, like the 97mm wide glass dividing transoms, ensures increased structural integrity, allowing for large-scale glazing solutions and continuous glass areas of up to 10.5m². The HX300 system also allows for all Internorm timber / aluminium windows (one or two sash) to be integrated where required.
Toughened glass panes protect from injuries when glass breaks but also offer a thermal insulation of Uw-values up to 0.73 W/m²K with soundproofing up to 40 dB. Furthermore, the HX300 features multi-layered laminated frame construction with the facility for window sills and patio floors to be connected neatly and tightly.
Internorm's I-tec Glazing and FIX-O-ROUND technology is incorporated as standard. The continuous, all around fixing of the glass pane also ensures better stability for higher life span, increased sound insulation and burglary protection.

W: www.internorm.co.uk

Sponsored by MarleyEternit

Liniar launches its own 'bible' for specifiers

Liniar has launched its brand new Specification Guide showcasing the company's range of windows and doors. Liniar says the new full colour, 94-page guide contains all the information that anyone could possibly need to know about specifying its products, making it the perfect 'bible' for the Liniar range. Packed from cover to cover, the Specification Guide contains full details of Liniar lead-free PVCu products, including in-depth technical data and measurements on every different window and door in the range, secondary products, case studies and follow up information.

The company says it has already received fantastic feedback from customers, architects and specifiers alike thanks to the Guide, which can be viewed online in book format (**http://bit.ly/LiniarSpecGuide**) or ordered for free as a hard copy at **www.LiniarSpecGuide.co.uk/yb1**.

To accompany its Specification Guide, Liniar has also launched an online resource centre for specifiers and developers, containing a wide range of information to assist with specifying Liniar profile.

W: www.liniar.co.uk/specifiers

Faster installation with Warmup's StickyMat

Warmup has launched a new underfloor heating product for self-builders and homeowners looking to achieve energy efficiency within the home. StickyMat is suitable for all projects, ranging from new build to retrofits and refurbishments. The heating mat consists of a thin loose wire, evenly spaced and taped to a pressure sensitive adhesive mesh. This makes it incredibly fast and easy to install. When using StickyMat against a similar product without pressure sensitive adhesive, the installation of StickyMat was 35 per cent faster. Underfloor heating is well-established as the modern heating solution of choice. Electric underfloor heating systems provide an easy to install, cost effective and versatile heating solution, whether used as a primary or secondary source of heating.

Warmup's StickyMat can be easily installed to provide quality underfloor heating

JELD-WEN launches pinless beading

JELD-WEN will be offering pinless beading across a selection of its premium painted timber windows after development and testing demonstrated its superior aesthetic merits and performance credentials. Compared with traditional alternatives, pinless beading provides a smoother, more attractive finish with no visible pin holes on the face of the bead. Manufactured from an FSC certified timber composite, pinless beading is more stable and environmentally friendly as it offers a longer-lasting finish that is less prone to rot and needs replacing less frequently.

Tony Pell, windows senior product manager at JELD-WEN, said: "As a premium manufacturer, we have responded to feedback from our customers and the marketplace, as well as utilising modern materials to develop this new glazing solution.

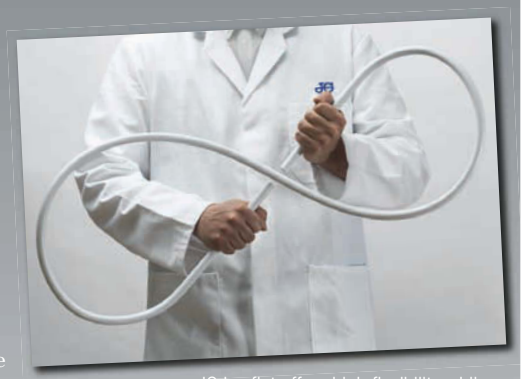
"With its enhanced performance and superior finish we recognised that pinless beading was ideal for our fully finished window ranges. We're looking forward to seeing how the market reacts to the new launch and will be interested to hear how it is received from our customers."

JELD-WEN will offer pinless beading as standard on its softwood factory painted and glazed windows. Colour co-ordinated pinless beading will also be an option across the manufacturer's standard window colours and its range of special RAL colours. The range of standard colours will also be supplied with end caps to the bottom bead to further enhance the finish.

W: www.jeld-wen.co.uk

JG Speedfit offers a flat and flexible solution

JG Speedfit has unveiled the JG Layflat plastic pipework. The new product is ultra flexible but remains flat once laid. It allows greater control and ease of movement, making it possible for a single person to meander and route the pipe through joists and tight spaces.



JG Layflat offers high flexibility while remaining flat after installation

JG Speedfit says the flexible nature of the plastic pipe makes transporting JG Layflat hassle-free – in comparison to other copper equivalents – as it is very light to carry and compact enough to be loaded into a small space. Regardless of whether you are using a 25m or a 150m JG Layflat coil, the pipe is also consistently easy to remove from the packaging.

Thanks to the inbuilt barrier layer preventing the ingress of air, as well as the smooth inner surface of the JG Layflat pipe, a permanent unrestricted flow through the system can be assured as no limescale or corrosion would occur within the lifetime of the product.

W: www.johnguest.com/speedfit

www.marleyeternit.co.uk/myhouse

Viessmann's most affordable boiler launched

Viessmann has unveiled a new high quality boiler with the launch of the Vitodens 050-W, a gas fired condensing combi boiler that extends the Vitodens range to the average UK home and budget.

Vitodens 050-W

As the most affordable Viessmann available, the Vitodens 050-W has a compact design and quiet operation, and is an ideal replacement for outdated boilers in flats, apartments and smaller homes.

The new system has been engineered to offer homeowners lower spare part costs by ensuring that components can be replaced individually. It is an advantage over other boilers on the market which may require, for example, a complete circuit board replacement for a single component fault. Maintenance is straightforward and therefore cost efficient because the service-relevant components are easily accessible from the front.

At the heart of the boiler is Viessmann's unique Inox-Radial heat exchanger. Constructed from high quality stainless steel, it is corrosion resistant and covered by a ten-year warranty instead of the standard three. Weather compensation can be easily incorporated with the simple addition of an outdoor sensor, as the circuit board already includes the software for weather compensation operation. In addition, the control unit is prepared ready for plug-in time clocks and wireless receivers.

W: www.viessmann.co.uk

Uponor's thinnest underfloor heating system

Uponor has launched its Minitec underfloor heating system, which it says it's the thinnest system on the market. With a finished installation height that can add as little as just two centimetres to any floor, Minitec can be quickly installed on top of existing screed or tile floors with minimal application preparation required.

The Minitec system's proximity to the surface also means that it significantly reduces both floor heat-up times and temperature change, providing the same level of comfort at a low operating temperature.

The water-based system can be fitted by just one installer and uses adhesive panels with raised foil naps and prepared grooves to guide the pipe loops, which can be laid at both 45° and 90° angles depending on requirement, across the floor. The pipe can simply be 'clicked' into place by the individual installer, avoiding the need for any specialist stapling installation tools, and then connected to the manifold as with any traditional underfloor heating system.

Self-adhesive edging strips in I and L profiles, as well as doorway mounting kits, are also included in all Minitec kits.

Once laid, the system can be covered by a floor-levelling compound. The entire installation is just 15mm in height and once the compound has dried, which could take as little as just 24 hours, then the required floor covering can be laid.

W: www.uponor.co.uk

Celebrity attention for Granite Transformations

Chef, writer and TV personality Rosemary Shrager has chosen materials from Granite Transformations for new kitchen worktops and for resurfacing counters, tiled areas and floors at her celebrated Cookery School and nearby Patisserie shop.

Offering a variety of culinary courses and hosting exclusive Chef's Table dining experiences, the Cookery School has recently added The Dining Room on the second floor, which hosts exclusive dinner events and provides the setting for filming Rosemary's TV food programmes. Granite Transformations were approached about installing its hardwearing and luxurious agglomerate materials in this busy area.

Granite Transformations' prefabricates worktops off-site before dropping the finished components into place over existing surfaces, making for simple installations. Rosemary selected mottled grey quartz Pietra Serena surfaces for the Chef's Table worktop and splashbacks and Patisserie retail counters, which were installed with minimal joins and bonded edge pieces. For the cookery school cloakrooms, Black Sapphire granite floor tiles, quartz Polar Ice liners and Subway Pearl rectangular glass mosaic tiles were specified for various applications. The non-porous and stain, scratch and impact resistant qualities of these materials make them ideal for bathroom duties, whilst the ability to install these finishes over existing tiles and flooring should keep washroom downtime to a minimum.

Chef and TV personality, Rosemary Shrager

W: www.granitetransformations.co.uk

Summer is here with Internorm promotion

Until June 26, Internorm is offering its customers free upgrades to triple glazing and aluminium cladding on selected products. For this limited period, customers can take advantage of Internorm's enhanced energy efficiency and quality design.

The promotion offers customers the chance to upgrade to triple glazing when they purchase any of its UPVC, UPVC/aluminium or timber/aluminium windows or lift and slide doorsets.

Homeowners can also take full advantage of Internorm's weather resistant aluminium cladding for free. The cladding is available in a wide range of design possibilities and in all standard colours on almost all UPVC windows,

Andreas Simmer, managing director of Internorm UK, said: "Our free upgrades are available on a wide range of Internorm window systems, which offer customers great value for money. The ability to upgrade Internorm's high performance windows provides homeowners even more choice, with a product that combines high quality design with the latest advances in window technology."

W: www.internorm.co.uk

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SIGA slate offers true authentic alternative

Thousands of slates from SIGA 32 slates were selected for the renovation of Hounds Road, a private residential property in Chipping Sodbury, Bristol.

Hounds Road is in an area where roofing materials require Welsh Park Conservation Officer approval, and SIGA 32 was chosen as an approved alternative to the Welsh slate originally used in the area. In total, approximately 4,200 500x250 slates were laid over a 210m² area.

Due to the type of building being renovated, longevity of the slate was essential, and SIGA 32 provided this thanks to its 75-year warranty, which is backed by SIG. The company says its SIGA 32 is one of the strongest, hardest slates available and combines excellent durability with a rugged, natural texture. The product is available in two different thicknesses and is suitable for all parts of the UK.

Carl Butcher, who was the client on the project, said: "The slate perfectly complements not only the local area but also the timber windows on the building, which were supplied by SIG."

A popular choice with homeowners, self-builders and developers, the SIGA Specification range of slates provide a selection of high-quality first-selection slates, covering a broad range of colours and textures.

SIGA 32 slates at Hounds Road

W: www.sigaslate.co.uk

New English style options from Mendip

Mendip Stoves has introduced its new Churchill woodburning stoves, which it says are fully in keeping with the company's distinctive English styling and deliver the highest efficiencies in woodburning heating.

A Churchill stove from Mendip

The range is available with four heat output levels – from 4.6 to 10 kW – to suit any size room. All the models have convection tops for improved heat transfer and there is also a Churchill Convection stove, in all four power outputs, which have convection plates on the sides as well. These not only improve the heat output into the room, but also mean that the stove can be situated closer to external combustibles. All the stoves are free-standing and there are also models with an optional integrated log store.

The contemporary design is kept simple but aesthetically pleasing with a universal air control system for simpler use, and a closed combustion air input, which only requires an external air supply. The curved glass front door gives a warming view of the flames from a wider angle.

As well as gaining a beautiful addition to any home, consumers buying a Mendip stove will also be supporting the Woodland Trust, as every stove sold ensures a donation of £10, which will help the charity plant hundreds more native trees across the country.

W: www.mendipstoves.co.uk

Success of Aurora roof windows grows

Over a year after the launch of the Aurora Roof Window in the UK by LB Roof Windows, the company has reported a large surge in demand for this product, with sales up by almost a quarter in the past six months.

Adrian Cooper, sales director of LB Roof Windows, said: "Delivering very similar benefits to the more well-known brands, the Aurora Roof Window is much more competitively priced.

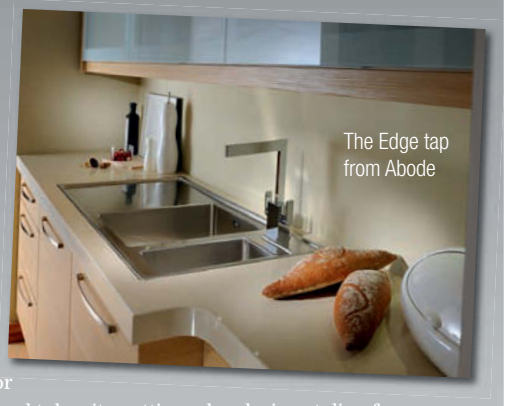
"We keep a watchful eye on the market in order to anticipate future trends and needs and this is why a year ago we launched Aurora in the UK. This alternative to the more popular brands satisfies both quality and price requirements to the end-consumer. We recently took on more storage space to significantly increase our stock levels, as our goal is to offer not only quality products, but also quick turnaround on orders and impeccable customer service. Our clients can also order roof windows online, through our easy to use website, for next day delivery anywhere in the UK."

Aside from Aurora – and Velux and Dakea roof windows – the company also supplies skylights, flashings, blinds and all the associated accessories. LB Roof Windows is also a supplier of Coxdome flat roof domes in a variety of choices, ranging from circular, to pyramid shaped domes and the more commonly used square flat roof domes.

W: www.lbroofwindows.co.uk

Abode adds new design element with the Edge

Thanks to a change in recent years that has seen the humble kitchen tap take its rightful place as an essential element in the home, Abode says kitchen taps are now high on the agenda in the design stakes. Its taps use only the finest components, from the silky smooth valve cartridges to the anti-splash aerators at the end of the spout, to add a new component to an elegant kitchen look.



The Edge tap from Abode

The Edge tap is an example of what Abode's taps can offer, as the low pressure monobloc mixer tap offers a striking minimalist design. Its architecturally tall design – standing at 275mm – features a quarter turn action for precise flow control and takes its cutting edge design styling from contemporary kitchen design. Requiring a minimum 0.4 bar pressure, this tap is supplied complete with fast fit tails for fast, simple fitting.

Smooth on the eye and smooth to the touch, Edge is available in four popular finishes – Chrome, Brushed Nickel, Granite Black and Gloss white, and each and every one will look stunning in all modern homes.

W: www.abode.eu

www.marleyeternit.co.uk/myhouse

Lumi sheds new light on window options

Apeer has entered the windows market with a new, structurally bonded window and door glazing system.

Calling it a first in its field, Apeer says the new Lumi collection is set to bring the seamless sophistication of iconic glass structure to the residential housing market. Offering a frame-free, 'wall of light profile', the triple glazed Lumi collection is distinguished by its fused ceramic colour border. This is available in eight different exterior colours and eight further interior finishes.

The new Lumi collection from Apeer with its distinctive fused ceramic coloured border

As well as being available in a full suite of matching designs, Lumi offers a host of construction and performance benefits. It incorporates stormproof design with flush proportional glazing, which is 50mm triple glazed (6-4-4) toughened glass for maximum insulation and noise reduction. The 80mm GRP double rebate frame offers exceptional U-Values – as low as 0.7w/m²k on fixed glazing panels – while the double euro groove allows for versatile hardware options, concealed hinges and window locks.

Lumi is also available with the high security Winkhaus lock system; Kitemark glass and Kitemark Lumi composite front door options; Fab & Fix hardware; variable clear glazing options; and concealed hinges to offer smooth action, high weight load opening and wide opening. It also comes with a ten year guarantee.

W: www.apeer.co.uk

Colour matching solutions from Garador

Garador says British streets are about to get smarter thanks to its new complete range of front entrance doors, which have been designed to complement the styles and designs of the company's garage doors.

The new FrontGuard front entrance doors have been carefully designed to match many of Garador's Up & Over and Sectional garage doors, and are available in a wide range of styles, designs and colours for both ultra modern and traditional homes.

The front entrance doors are all produced within the Garador group to offer the same high end manufacturing and functionality as its garage doors, including high security and new levels of thermal efficiency.

Garador says it is recognised for leading the way in technical developments and its new range of front doors follow this line with a range of advantages, such as extra secure (SBD) doors – which qualify for two points under the Government's Code for Sustainable Homes – and three way adjustable hinges for quick and easy installation.

With a choice of numerous colours and finishes, and optional features such as transom lights, brass or chrome spy holes, window drips and an electric strike plate with key catch for keyless access, Garador says everyone can build a door to suit their specific requirements and make their home look the best in the street.

The all white matching garage door and front entrance door is one example of Garador's new FrontGuard offer

W: www.garador.co.uk

New 3 in 1 Hot Tap covers all the bases

The new 3 in 1 Hot Tap from Häfele UK provides a jet flow stream of cold and hot water with a separate channel for piping hot water (98°C) delivery - all from one tap. Innovative design means there is no surge during draw off and no spluttering. Piping hot water is delivered instantly, compared to unvented systems in which 10-20ml of cold water remains in the tap body.

Its compact tank fits comfortably under most kitchen sink units and takes just 15 minutes to provide up to 5 litres of piping hot water.

Häfele UK says the 3 in 1 Hot Tap is not only easy to install but also more efficient than other leading competitors, with a standby loss of <600wh/24 hours and an impressive power of 2kW.

The new system also benefits from anti-freeze protection and a child proof push and turn mechanism. When combined with the filter accessory (sold separately) the system produces water with an improved taste, smell and clarity, filtering out lime, chlorine and metals such as lead and copper.

Häfele UK's new 3 in 1 Hot Tap, with a compact tank designed to fit easily out of sight

W: www.hafele.co.uk

Sandtoft offers new 'ground-breaking' tile

Sandtoft has launched what it calls the 'ground-breaking' Rivius roof tile, combining the aesthetics of slate with the benefits of a clay roof tile.

The Rivius tile is an authentic alternative to slate, which Sandtoft says is time consuming, complex and costly to lay. It is an interlocking clay tile with no need for double lapping, offering faster installation times. The tile's large format also makes it cheaper to use, while the use of clay as a more cost effective material to traditional slate offers savings on material costs.

Sandtoft's Rivius tile

Rivius is manufactured using bespoke moulds that have been crafted from the imprints of Welsh and Cumbrian slate to ensure the intricate texture and defined detail of natural slate is reflected in the final clay product. Sandtoft says this creates new opportunities for self-build projects to benefit from the look of slate but using a more cost-effective product.

Richard Bishop, category marketing manager for roofs at Wienerberger, said: "Until now, slate's only tangible advantage over clay has been its texture and appearance. By developing the new Rivius tile we have been able to extract that superior, unique finish and combine it with the range of benefits of using clay."

W: www.wienerberger.co.uk

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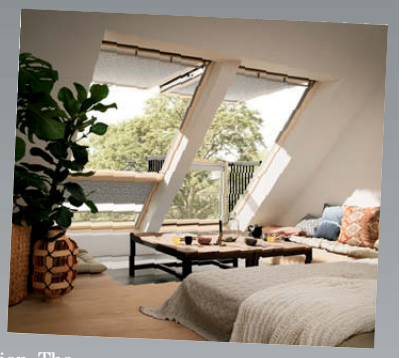
VELUX offers next generation balcony option

VELUX is bringing even more daylight into UK homes with the launch of its New Generation CABRIO Balcony, which transforms from a roof window into a balcony in seconds.



The New Generation CABRIO Balcony from VELUX

Triple glazing is now standard on the new CABRIO Balcony and the updated New Generation screwless, click-on covers have also been introduced, which VELUX says guarantees an energy and time efficient installation. The CABRIO Balcony is also available in a new larger size, with an external frame size of 114cm by 252cm, providing more space for enjoying the outdoors, indoors.

The upper section of the Balcony is Top-Hung and opens outwards, while the bottom section unfolds into a glazed balcony with side railings. The CABRIO Balcony can easily be combined with additional Top-Hung and fixed sloping windows to increase the amount of daylight entering a room, and to make the most of a view.

The CABRIO Balcony is made of high quality lacquered natural pine, with an easy-to-clean coating on the toughened outer pane, which keeps the glazing cleaner for longer. All glazing used has toughened outer and laminated inner panes for additional safety.

W: www.velux.co.uk

Restoring historic character with SSQ tiles

A cottage in Dartford, Kent, has undergone a roofing makeover using 4,000 standard grade Domiz roofing slate tiles from SSQ.

The owners, who purchased the property in 2014, wanted to restore character to the 170-year-old building and felt this could be achieved by replacing the old slates on the roof. The owners also wanted a cost effective solution that wouldn't compromise on quality, and so SSQ's standard grade Domiz slates were selected.

The natural rich, blue-grey colour of Domiz will not fade in sunlight or harsh environments, regardless of the grade selected. Tested in accordance with EN 12326 and carrying the CE marking, Domiz slate is covered by a 50-year guarantee, meaning it is likely to outlast the structure it rests upon. The cost of the standard grade is less than the 1st grade Domiz slate, and even though extra labour is required in comparison to 1st grade when it comes to laying the slate, SSQ says the savings made on materials make it a worthwhile investment. Plus, despite the additional grading and sorting, the end appearance will be just as consistent and as beautiful as a 1st grade slate roof.

Domiz roofing slate tiles from SSQ

W: www.ssqgroup.com

Biomass boiler for any room in the house

An off-grid family home on the Scottish isles of Orkney is benefiting from a Windhager FireWIN Klassik 12kW biomass boiler in replacement of its previous, inefficient oil-fired system.

The FireWIN Klassik wood pellet boiler has replaced the family's AGA as the primary heat source for their home, providing central heating and hot water to the property at a significantly reduced cost.

Windhager's FireWIN Klassik central heating system is designed to provide a stylish yet effective source of heating to homes and can operate from any room in the house as it only requires 0.37m² of floor space. The design replicates a wood burning fire with a visible flame concealed behind a double glazed window to prevent high surface temperatures, providing a cosy atmosphere whilst efficiently heating the house. It is also available in a range of colours so that it can be integrated with the colour scheme of the home.

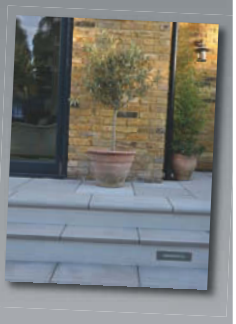
The highly efficient boiler has economical fuel consumption as it modulates the output of heating required and has a low energy consumption of up to 50W. The FireWIN wood pellet range can be manually or automatically fed and has an automatic ash compaction feature requiring it to only be emptied as little as two or three times a year.

The Windhager FireWIN Klassik 12kW biomass boiler

W: www.windhager.co.uk

Natural Paving Products offers a step up

Natural Paving Products has expanded its accessories collection with the addition of a premium range of step kits and pool copings.



The company says its new range adds a new dimension to landscape design for 2015, allowing customers to create stylish transitions between different areas. Available in eight different colours to complement Natural Paving Products' flagstone ranges, the step kits and pool copings can be easily integrated into any garden design.

All of the new range comes with a practical and textured finish, and is available in a variety of sizes, thicknesses and colours to accommodate the most creative designs. The step kits and pool copings are also available in a number of pack sizes to offer flexibility and the best value possible.

Malcolm Gough, business development director at Natural Paving Products, said: "The release of our new step kits and pool copings for 2015 reflects our commitment to providing a holistic service for all our customers' landscaping needs. These new ranges, in particular, give the ability to add that extra special finishing touch to a project as well as the chance to think more creatively."

Natural Paving Products' entire range of natural stone products is manufactured in accordance with the company's commitment to responsible trading across its full end-to-end supply chain and carrys full CE documentation.

W: www.naturalpaving.co.uk

www.marleyeternit.co.uk/myhouse

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Phase 1 Footings & Foundations

In this section...

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Lauren Haines discusses all things foundations including the different types and key considerations that need to be made

38 *Calor*
Alistair Lovell looks at the fuel and heating options that can save you money when building off the mains gas grid

Phase 1 The foundations of a successful build

Lauren Haines is a director at Elliotts, the South's leading independent supplier of building products for both the trade and public. Here she explains the different types of foundations and key considerations when laying them

Foundations are the base for the building to be built from so obviously they're extremely important to any project. A small mistake in the design and build of your foundation could result in costly problems later down the line.

Site surveys

Most architects when designing the type of foundation that will be most suited to your ground conditions will advise a site survey. While it may seem like an unnecessary expense, having a site survey can avoid issues later on and it is best practice to ensure that as much information is available prior to the build process starting.

Having a site survey will look at:

- Soil conditions and how they may affect the depth of the foundations.
- Ground water levels.
- Any risks, such as subsidence caused by geological faults.
- Chemicals and contamination.
- Impact of trees to foundations.
- Picking the right type of foundation.
- As a guide there are four types of foundation – the Architect and Site survey will determine the best option for you and will specify the depth of the foundation trench.

Deep strip foundations

These tend to be the least expensive and are most suitable for normal ground conditions. They are made of a concrete strip, sometimes reinforced with steel mesh, which supports the walls. The trench depth can be varied but should be at least 1m with a width of 600mm.

The concrete should have a minimum depth of 224mm. The walls are then built up from this base with a damp proof incorporated above ground level.

Trenchfill foundations

Trenchfill foundations are filled with concrete almost to the top of the trench and, while they are more expensive than their deep strip counterparts, they do get you out of the ground quickly. They are used when soil is loose or in areas with a high water table. In areas with heavy clay and in the presence of trees, Trenchfill foundations may be taken deeper, to a level where the moisture content of the subsoil is unaffected.

Raft foundations

These are used when the ground is inherently stable but where conditions deep below the surface, such as mining, might lead to ground movement. The reinforced raft is cast on top of consolidated hardcore and is shaped at the edge to provide a step on which both leaves of the wall are constructed.

Piled foundations

Piled foundations are used where good bearing ground can only be found at deeper levels, or where physical restraints make other forms of foundation impossible. They are usually carried out by specialist contractors. The piles can be dug, bored or driven into the ground and support a concrete ringbeam or groundbeam that spans from pile to pile, upon which the house is built.

This ringbeam can be prefabricated but if it is cast on site it may be necessary to have reinforcement cages ready, made up to an engineer's specification. In certain situations it may also be necessary to have compressible materials on hand to line the underside or sides of the beam.

Concrete

Generally concrete is supplied to site as "Readymix" and delivered in vehicles with a mixer on the rear. The other option is to mix on site but the benefit of "Readymix" is that you will have consistency of the product from batch to batch and any retardants or accelerators can be included in the mix. Access to site will need to be considered as the vehicle will need to pour directly into the trenches. It is also possible to hire a pump which enables the mix to be pumped into the trench from a distance, should that be necessary.

There are also a wide choice of blocks which can speed up construction in trenches, for example Trenchblocks, which can also improve the thermal performance of the building and meet relevant regulations ■

Contact details:

Elliotts' highly experienced staff take pride in offering quality advice to their customers. If you need help or advice on anything, from how to lay foundations to tiling a roof, speak to Elliotts on 023 8038 5300 or visit the website www.elliotts.uk

Common Pitfalls

- Often self-builders underestimate groundwork costs when budgeting – make sure you allow for this important stage
- Cutting back on time and design in the early stages can lead to things going wrong later down the line, resulting in costly remedial works and delays to the project

Phase 1 From the ground up

Alistair Lovell of Calor looks at the fuel and heating options that can save you money

Let's be honest. Choosing how to heat your home isn't the most exciting part of a self-build project!

But getting the heating and hot water system right from the start is key to creating the perfect living space. And while you can't really see it, for many of us it can be as important as the luxury bathroom or show-stopping kitchen we have in mind!

So if you're starting to plan your build, take a look at your options now and you could save a lot of money, especially if you're building off the mains gas grid.

Weighing it up

As a self-builder, one of the first things you'll need to know is which fuel options are available to you and which best fit your lifestyle.

You're probably asking yourself lots of questions already. How much hot water do I need? How can I keep energy costs down? What fuel can I cook with?

The list can seem endless and, if you are off the mains gas grid, you may think you have to settle for less than the average homeowner – but that's not the case!

You might be lucky and have a mains gas supply close by. The National Grid may be able to connect your home but this can cost hundreds or even thousands of pounds and it's likely to cause a lot of disruption, so it might not be an option for you.

Perhaps there are other properties close by that are running on oil but you're put off by the unsightly tank in the garden and would like to find a fuel that's cleaner too?

Lots of self-builders are looking at renewable energy at the moment, but you might feel nervous about planning your home's heating system solely around a technology that is dependent on the weather.

Getting connected

The good news is that you can have all the conveniences of mains gas, off-grid with an LPG heating system. It's also a great partner fuel for renewable energy, giving you the best of both worlds.

From central heating to hot water, gas fires to cooking, LPG is really versatile. You can even use it to run a tumble dryer, so you've got far more choices when it comes to planning your new kitchen – and you don't have to think about using other fuels to cook with.

If you like the sound of an even greener option you could think about using a hybrid system such as the Daikin Altherma hybrid heat pump from Calor, which combines an air source heat pump with LPG. ►

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Below: Calor's underground tank and the Daikin Altherma hybrid heat pump, which combines an air source heat pump with LPG

> *If you're building a new home off-grid, don't assume it will cost the earth to have gas*

The clever heat pump uses the free, outside air to heat your home but you can always rely on the on-site gas supply when the weather gets chillier for heat and on-demand hot water.

It's intelligent too. Depending on the outside temperature, the Daikin switches between the heat pump, gas boiler or both to find the most efficient way to heat your home. It could mean you use up to 35 per cent less gas compared to a standard, condensing boiler.

Money, money, money

As much as 60 per cent of your energy bill goes to heating your new home and providing hot water. That's a significant chunk of money, so you'll want to think carefully about the efficiency of your heating system, especially when it comes to the SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) rating of your home.

The basic principle is that the more efficient you can make your property, the easier it is to have the build signed off.

Installing LPG can help. It has a better SAP rating than oil or electricity so you may not need to use additional renewable technologies to help improve the rating.

There is also a fantastic range of A-rated, high efficiency LPG boilers on the market. These are made to save you money on your heating bills and you'll often find they are cheaper to buy than an oil boiler.

If you're renovating a property that had a previous heating source such as oil or electricity, switching to a hybrid system may mean you can benefit from the Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) too. This great scheme could pay you back up to £600 a year, for up to seven years so it's well worth exploring.

Digging deep

Take a look at the installation cost of an LPG system and you might be pleasantly surprised.

For example, if you had an oil system in mind you'll have to buy the tank up front, which can cost as much as £2,000 plus the added expense of installation.

With Calor, there's no tank to buy and for a small monthly charge, they look after the tank for you as well.

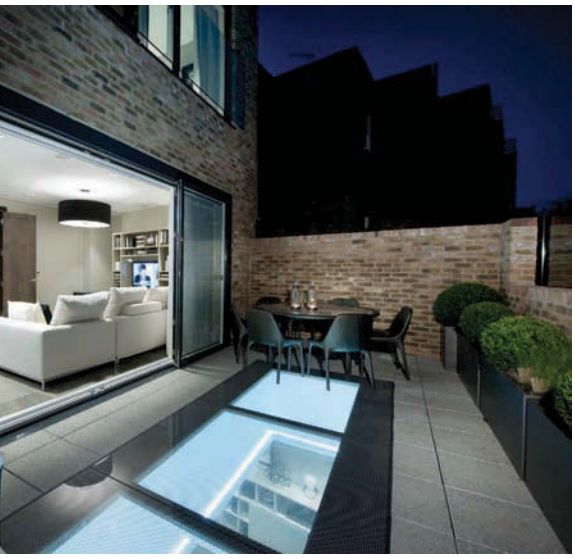
Calor gas tanks can be buried underground or sited over ground and clever tank monitoring systems will also order fuel top-ups for you, so you don't even need to worry about reordering gas when levels are low.

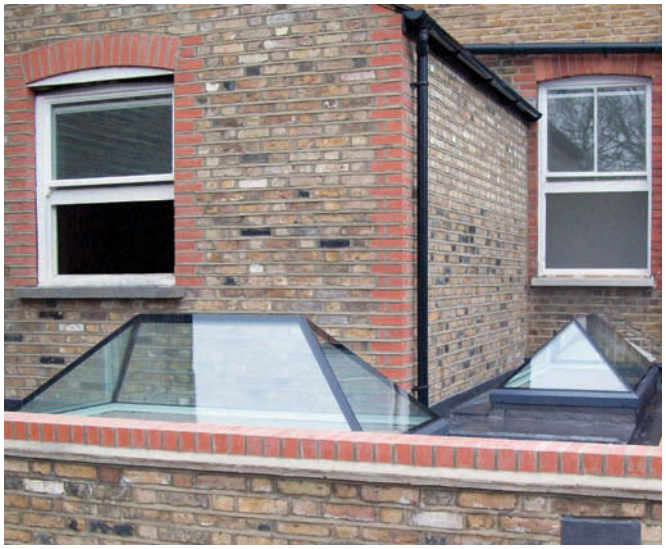
While you're probably a long way off thinking about what your new garden will look like, hiding the tank underground is a really neat way of freeing up extra space!

The other great news is that if you're renovating and switching from another fuel source, Calor will connect you to gas and install an above ground tank free of charge* – or if you have builders already on site so are able to do your own groundworks, Calor will deliver your underground tank and connect you to gas free of charge.

So if you're building a new home off-grid, don't assume that it will cost the earth for you to have gas. By choosing LPG for your dream home you'll have a fuel that is convenient, versatile and efficient too ■

For more information on how Calor can help you install gas in your new home, visit www.calor.co.uk or call 0800 085 5023. *Offer ends 30th June 2015. See calor.co.uk for full terms and conditions.





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Phase 2 Framing Your Build

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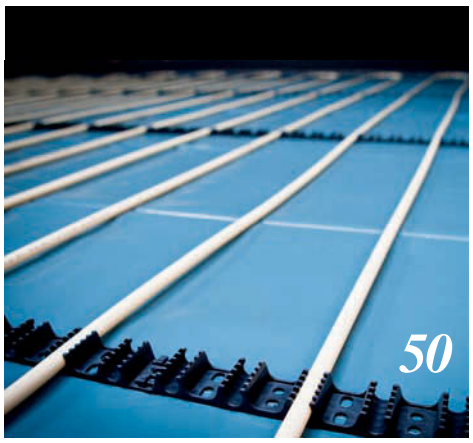


Phase 2

Bringing the outside in with patio doorsets

When renovating a property or planning a new-build many self-builders are realising the merits that patio doors can offer. As with every self-build project, keeping within budget, staying sustainable and complying with the latest Building Regulations are just some of the things to consider when choosing the right products for your project. With this in mind, JELD-WEN says it is on hand to take care of the hard work so you can relax and enjoy the multiple benefits that a timber patio doorset can bring to your home…

One of the main reasons why self-builders are including timber patio doorsets in their plans is that they are starting to appreciate that regardless of the property's design or location, they allow homeowners to expand their property by bringing the outside in. Advances in glass production methods are blurring the boundaries between outdoor and indoor living spaces, flooding properties with light and fresh air without compromising on space or thermal efficiency. Having noticed a growing trend for timber and oak designs, JELD-WEN has enhanced its range by producing slim timber frames to maximise the glazed area, helping to create light, airy living spaces. The Farndale French range is an excellent example, as not only is visibility vastly improved, but a beautiful minimalistic finish is also achieved.

A folding sliding patio doorset offers further advantages where space is at a premium, and allows you to simply slide back the door and fold away to create a gateway to the outside. JELD-WEN's solid oak Canberra folding sliding patio doorset neatly packs away, creating a completely flexible wall – and for those wanting to achieve the same style with colour finish options, the new Darwin hardwood patio doorset will be available from July 2015. These patios are available made to measure to fit into the most awkward spaces.

Having it all

Many are also realising that you don't need to compromise on one element of a project to benefit another, as today's patio doorset designs offer a versatility that meets the demands of even the most challenging renovations. Choosing a

Far Left: Darwin folding sliding doorset starting from £2808 + VAT (available from July 2015)

Left: Canberra folding sliding doorset starting from £3,023 + VAT

Below: Farndale French doorset starting from £1,443 + VAT

factory painted or stained patio doorset will save time on site and extend the initial maintenance period depending on the choice of finish.

Investing in good quality timber products from the start means that they will need replacing far less frequently. Self-builders are increasingly interested in choosing products that offer a natural finish and are sustainable too, making timber patios, which come from Chain of Custody certified forests, a wise choice. If you're working on a large renovation, one of the biggest challenges can be keeping the windows and doors consistent throughout the property. JELD-WEN has overcome this issue by offering a wide range of timber patio doorsets that can be complemented by JELD-WEN's extensive range of windows including colour finish and hardware ■

www.jeld-wen.co.uk

CASE STUDY

JELD-WEN breathes new life into Perownes Farm

When Perownes Farm, an idyllic 16th Century farmhouse in rural Norfolk, needed re-building following the devastating effects of a fire, JELD-WEN's timber windows, patio doorsets and stairs were the natural choice to bring the property back to life.

The thatched roof farmhouse, nestled among two acres of beautiful gardens, took three weeks to take down, following which it was rebuilt using oak and original materials, including beams and bricks from the chimney that complemented the property's six bedrooms and bathrooms and five reception rooms.

The family opted for JELD-WEN's Canberra folding sliding patio doorset, which offers a contemporary finish that also eliminated the worry of doors bumping against walls or furniture. The folding sliding patio doorset maximises space in the busy family home by creating a removable wall, encouraging light transference and a sense of freedom and openness.

JELD-WEN's expertise was also enlisted to meet all requirements for the property's 33 windows. The manufacturer's award-winning oak casement range was the ideal choice as it offered a range of sizes and designs to meet the needs of each individual window.

The final addition of a bespoke chamfered oak staircase from JELD-WEN's Prestige range was perfect for complementing the other components of the re-build, immediately creating an impressive and striking grand entrance.

Phase 2 Using fully opening skylights for restricted spaces

A renovation project at Owlstone Road, Cambridge, involved transforming a dreary kitchen and dining area into an open, well-lit space. Glazing Vision explains the role its electrically operated fully opening skylight played in achieving this

Terraced houses typically prevent natural daylight from entering the sides of the building and provide minimal space in which to extend. Low, dark ceilings also restrict the height of a room, further enclosing the living space and preventing daylight from entering the property from above.

Chadwick Dryer Clarke were approached in order to provide a clever design solution for this project. They were tasked to re-model the existing kitchen area to achieve maximum lighting whilst ensuring minimal alterations were made to the floor space.

Fully opening skylight for maximum daylight and ventilation

Glazing Vision installed an electrically operated fully opening skylight above the existing kitchen and dining area. This required a high level of skill and expertise to both meet safety requirements and achieve the desired minimalist effect.

Spanning 2000 x 1500mm, the glass rooflight allows natural daylight and ventilation to flood the interior. In a very densely populated area with space a premium, this approach brought large amounts of natural lighting into the west facing property.

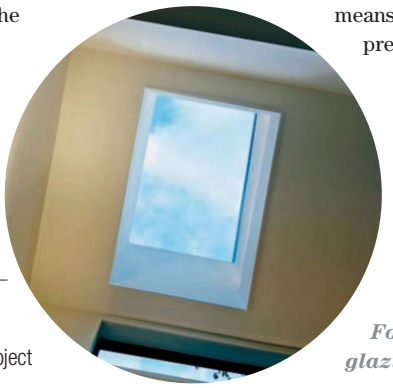
The skylight is also self-supporting, trackless and retractable, ideal for a property with restricted roof space. Its simplicity of style is deceptive; the clever design conceals sophisticated telescopic sliders, which open the skylight to the open air.

Results achieved from the project

The renovation has provided a spacious feel to the property, with the kitchen and dining area now incorporating neutral colours and flat panes. The skylight beautifully illuminates a room that celebrates a contemporary style, with the use of red lighting adding a bold feature to the calm interior.

Most significantly, the glazing solution has addressed the homeowner's requirement for additional light and space without needing to increase the volume of floor space. Glazing Vision's careful positioning of the skylight means that it opens up a room that was previously enshrouded in shadow.

Not only has the kitchen become a central focal point for the property where guests can congregate, the skylight has created views above and beyond the neighbouring terraced properties and enclosed garden space ■



Glazing Vision's electrically operated skylight brought natural daylight and ventilation to this project

For more information visit glazingvision.co.uk/request-cpd

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The *Phase 2* blueprint for success

Next year Klöeber will be celebrating its 10 year anniversary, in that time the company has grown and changed immeasurably, but the ethos and the quality of the products and service has remained consistent throughout and this has proved to be the blueprint for great success…

Originally Klöeber designed and supplied a suite of bespoke engineered timber doors and windows from Scandinavian Pine, Meranti hardwood and European Oak, these same products with a few tweaks and improvements along the way remain firmly in place today at the heart of the business. Klöeber's products have been featured on many prime time TV makeover & self-build programs which have raised the company profile and generated much interest. Widely regarded as market leaders for their timber Kustomfold bifolding doors, the Cambridge-based business became the first to qualify for Secured By Design for this product range in 2012. This further cemented the company's place within the industry.

As well as timber Klöeber now manages a supply chain of manufacturing partners to offer a wide range of bespoke aluminium and composite glazed products. The focus for all products is firmly based on four main criteria; these simple principles are quality, value for money, security and insulating values. Klöeber works closely with a number of European systems companies, UK glass manufacturers and distributors of ironmongery to ensure the best specification at the best price. Klöeber has built a brand based on confidence and quality which applies as much to the homeowner wishing to purchase one of their award winning FunkyFront doors, as it does to some of their larger house-builder clients committing to multi-million pound contracts on large scale housing projects. The sheer variety of products have allowed Klöeber to be a "go-to" company for a varied range of customers that have sometimes found it frustrating using a number of different companies for different products. Klöeber can offer not only bi-folding doors but also windows; windows that open inwards and outward; windows that tilt; windows that are fully reversible; fixed panels; gable glazing; both modern and traditional entrance doors systems; lift & slide doors; pitched & flat rooflights, and many other associated items. Most of the glazed products also come in three different types of engineered timber, thermally broken aluminium or composite, a mix of timber & aluminium creating thermal efficiency, strong secure profiles and a low maintenance finish. Together with a full installation service by fully trained and employed installation teams and the extensive warranty applied to all products and services, it's clear why Klöeber is a valid choice for all home improvers, developers and self-builders. Klöeber is now owned by the current management team who have all been in their dedicated roles for over five years. This management team has an extensive background within design, project management and construction, particularly within the house-building sector. This expertise means there is a company-wide high level of understanding of the design and build process, plus how glazing is integral to this. Klöeber understands the needs of the developer and self-builder and tailoring their services to suit this sector has always been paramount. The company does not approach selling in the same way that you would presume a "double glazing company" would do, in fact they're very keen to set themselves aside from this stereotype. They don't push to come to your house and force products on you and they don't offer you massive discounts to sign up to a deal. There's an all together more consultative and supportive approach applied with Klöeber. They're likely to add value to your project through sound advice from their experience. Klöeber often make sensible suggestions to keep the specification at an affordable level for their clients.

The company strongly recommends viewing the products first hand to get a real understanding for the quality and key features. You can do this at a number of exhibitions throughout the year. For a dedicated appointment

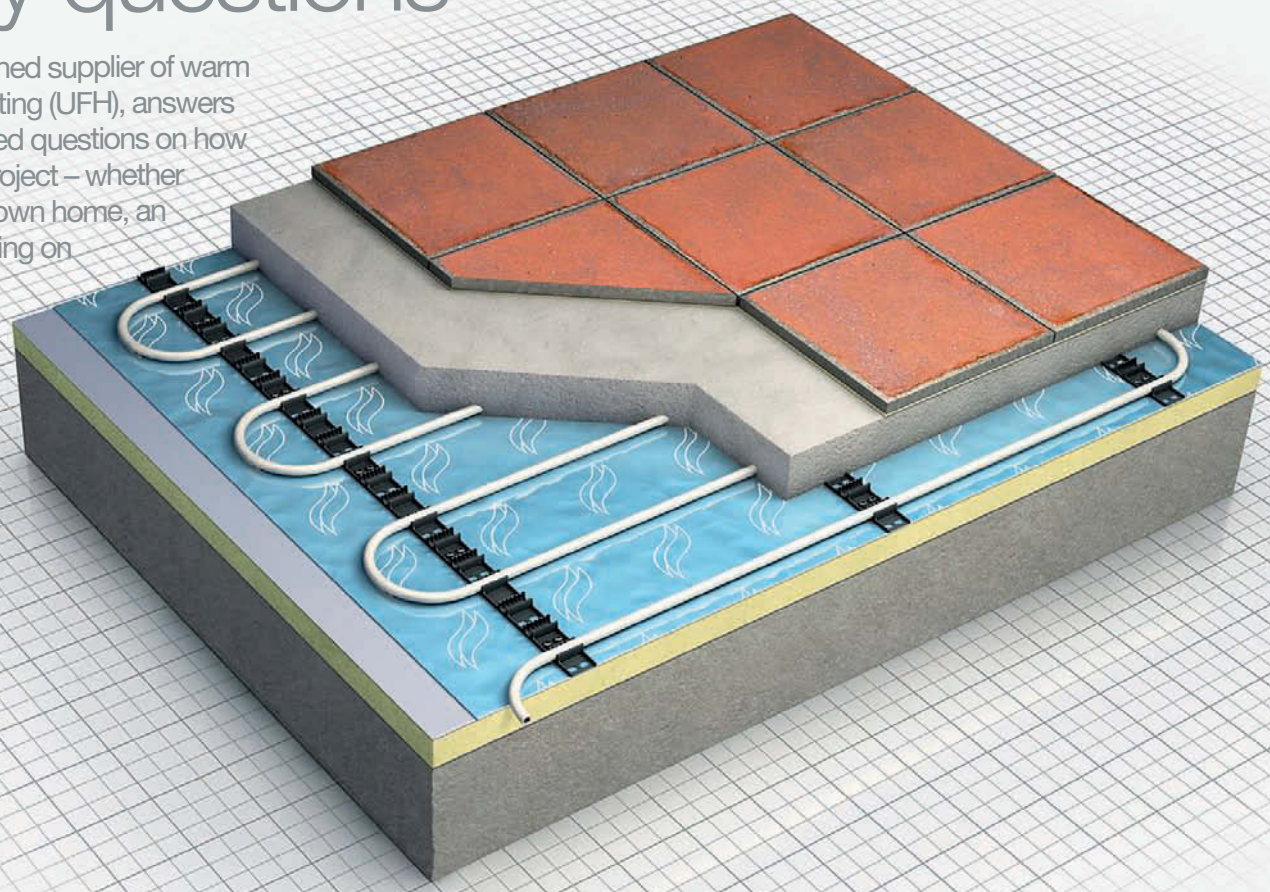
Klöeber also has three extensive showrooms; one at their head office in Somersham near Cambridge, one in Sunbury-on-Thames South West London and their recently opened flagship showroom in Grendon Underwood near Bicester, Buckinghamshire. Upon booking an appointment for these showrooms the customer will receive written confirmation, a map complete with directions, an appointment duration and the details of the advisor they'll be meeting. They'll be welcomed in to the showrooms for a consultation so the advisor can understand precisely what the requirements are and present the optimum options for the project. Many of Klöeber's customers receive multiple quotations for different products in a number of material types, to be able to fully understand the budgetary implications as well as the physical properties and pros & cons that each door & window may have. Klöeber has developed its own online quotation system that means they're extremely efficient in getting back to customers with all of the options. Most quotations can be returned within 48 hrs of initial contact. Klöeber will always talk the customer through all of the options and provide a wealth of knowledge and technical back up to ensure the choice is a well informed one ■

www.kloeber.co.uk

Above far left: Timber fixed glazed panels from Klöeber; Main pic: Klöeber's Kustomfold Aluminium bifold doors; Above top: Grendon Underwood Showroom; Above: Klöeber's Kustomfold Timber bifold doors; Left: Klöeber's Aluminium Sliding Doors

Phase 2 Underfloor heating: the key questions

Nu-Heat, an established supplier of warm water underfloor heating (UFH), answers some frequently asked questions on how it can work in your project – whether you're building your own home, an extension or embarking on a renovation



The way we heat our homes is changing with more of us choosing to move away from the traditional radiator system, instead opting for the benefits of underfloor heating (UFH). With this in mind, we take a look at some of the main considerations to make...

How does UFH work?
UFH is an 'invisible' heating system that works by pumping a controlled flow of warm water from any heat source, such as a boiler or heat pump, through tubing embedded in the floor. Because the emitting area is large, sufficient warmth is provided across the whole floor surface to heat the room effectively. For renovation projects, you can also fit the tube in low-profile panels that sit on top of the existing floor.

Is UFH suitable for my project?
UFH is suitable for virtually any property. However, it's important to take the insulation levels of the property into consideration as this dictates the heat output needed to keep the property warm.

All new UK properties will be suitable for UFH, as they meet strict guidelines on insulation and airtightness. Older properties can benefit from UFH too, thanks to retrofit solutions that offer high heat outputs. This is good news if you're renovating or building an extension and want UFH throughout the property, as there are now solutions available for this scenario. You can even have UFH on upper floors and in rooms with restricted height build up.

A good design and supply company, such as Nu-Heat, will specify and design an efficient and bespoke system that is well suited to your property and your lifestyle.

What about the existing radiator system?
UFH can work alongside any existing radiator system, so there's no need to update the entire heating system if you would prefer not to. Similarly, single room UFH solutions can be quickly and easily integrated into an existing system. LoPro Max OneZone, a single zone / room solution, heats up and cools down as quickly as a radiator system, so can work on the same time clock and is particularly well suited to kitchens, conservatories and areas with large amounts of glazing or lower levels of insulation.

Do I need a special boiler?
No, UFH works with gas, oil and LPG boilers as well as ground and air source heat pumps. Because UFH uses far lower water ►

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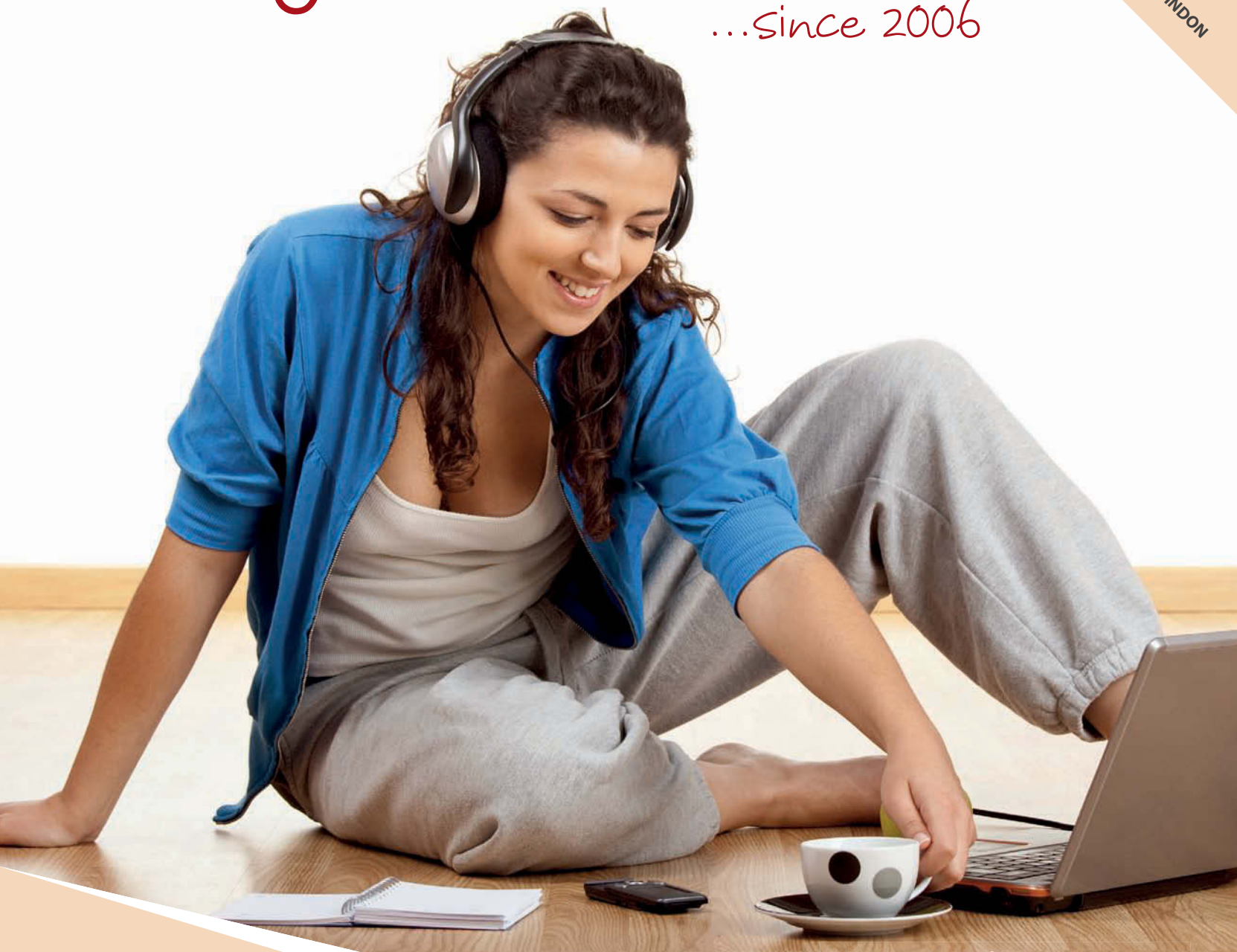

I helped my dad install Wunda's 'Easy Fit' overfloor heating in my flat over a long weekend.

It was really simple, we watched the 'Easy Fit' videos, followed the free pipe layout plan and spoke to the support team once.

It only cost £1,500 and dad reckons we saved at least £3,000 on the complete job - so I've just booked a holiday!

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When paired with a modern condensing boiler, UFH is cheaper to run and approximately 25 per cent more efficient than radiators. And, with a heat pump, up to 40 per cent cheaper to run

temperatures than a radiator system, the heat source doesn't have to work as hard so it operates much more efficiently, meaning lower annual running costs.

How is the UFH installed?

UFH should be simple to install in any property. However, the process differs dependent on the floor construction.

There are three basic types of UFH floor construction:

- Screed, where the tube is held within a layer of screed. This floor construction is the most popular and cost-effective solution for new builds and is easy to incorporate into the build schedule.
- Floating, where the tube sits in panels laid directly over the sub / rough floor. The floor components can be fitted at first-fix stage and floor coverings can be fitted as soon as the UFH has been installed.

Floating retrofit solutions:

- Dry retrofit systems, comprising pre routed board for the tube to sit in, can be simply laid directly over the existing floor on any floor level, without the need for excavation – causing minimal disruption to fittings.
- Wet retrofit systems can be laid over the existing floor too, and use a fast drying self-levelling compound meaning the perfectly level surface is ready for your chosen covering after just 72 hours.
- Joisted, where the UFH tube is fitted between or straddling the existing joists and sometimes held in place by a metal heat diffuser plate, such as ClippaPlate. The floor coverings can be fitted as soon as the floor deck is in place.

To ensure a straightforward installation with minimal disruption a reputable design and supply company will support the installer, or competent Diy-er with:

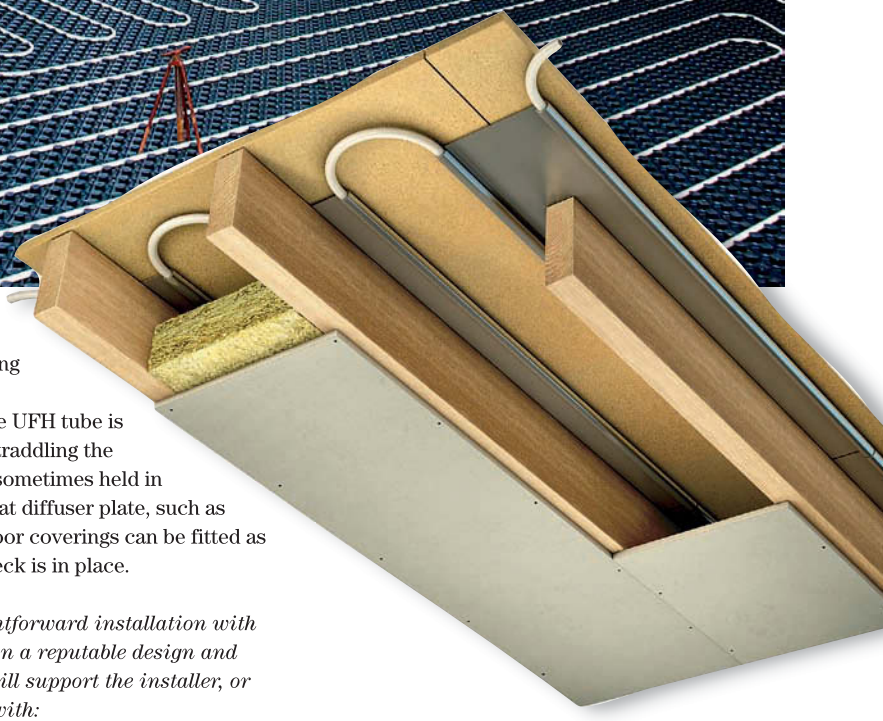
- Technical telephone support.
- Clear and concise installation manuals.
- Clear and concise tube layout drawings.

Can I have carpet?

Yes. UFH is compatible with a wide range of floor coverings – including carpet.

The best floor coverings for use with UFH are hard surfaces such as stone and ceramic tile as they transfer heat effectively. However, carpet, engineered hardwood, timber, linoleum and vinyl also perform well and the design and supply company will be able to advise on suitability.

Is UFH cheaper to run and more efficient vs. radiators and electric UFH?



Above: joisted floor construction – the UFH tube is fitted between or straddling the existing joists

When paired with a modern condensing boiler, UFH is cheaper to run and approximately 25 per cent more efficient than radiators. And, with a heat pump, up to 40 per cent cheaper to run!

You can even enjoy warm water UFH that heats up as quickly as a radiator, giving an instant and consistent warmth, at one-third of the running cost of electric UFH. An efficient heating system that offers superior comfort levels and saves you both energy and money, makes UFH the obvious choice for any new build, extension or renovation ■

www.nu-heat.co.uk

'Easy Fit' FLOOR HEATING

...since 2006

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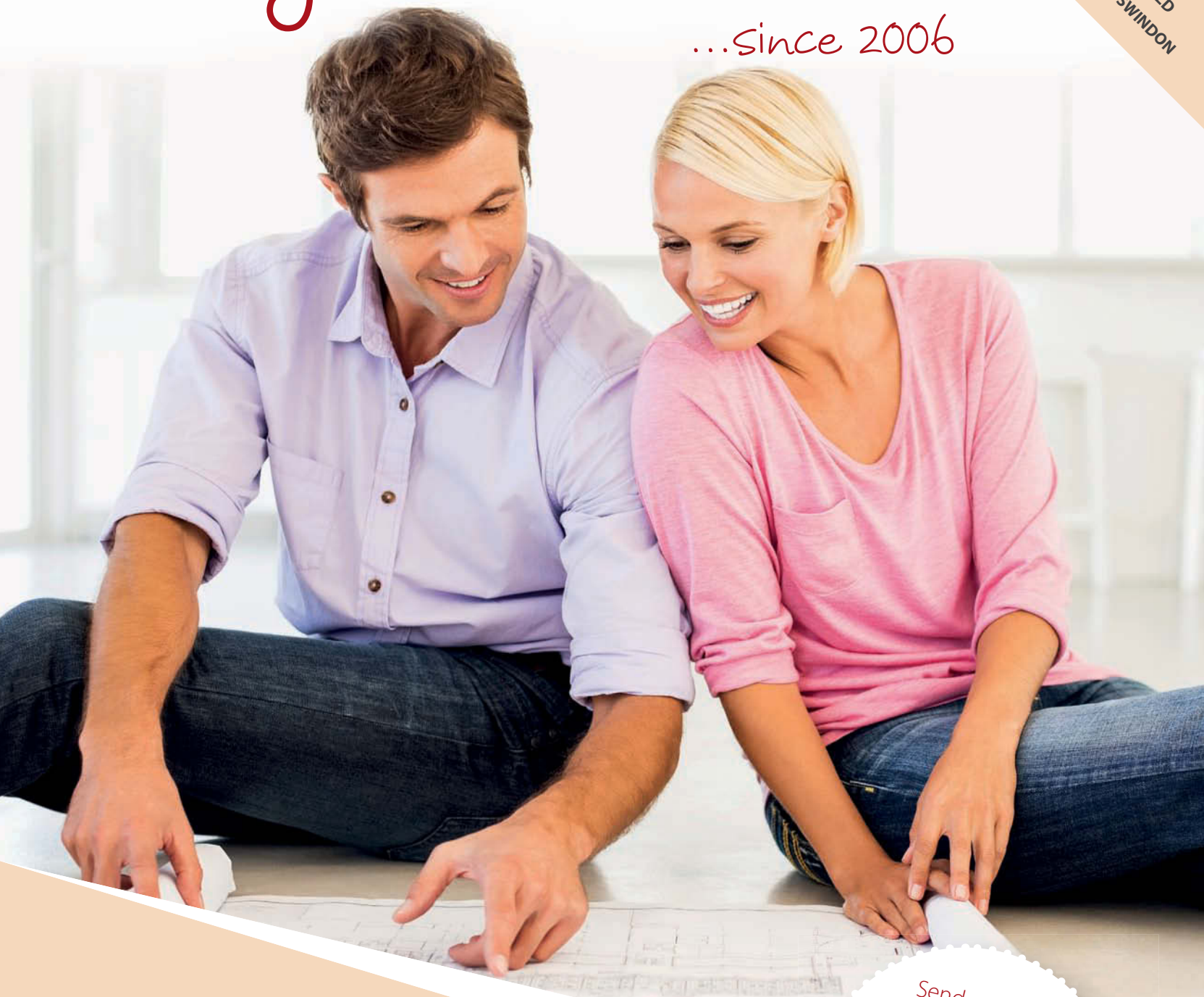

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As soon as we watched the 'Easy Fit' videos we knew we could do the floor heating in our renovation ourselves.

We followed their videos, pipe layout plan and spoke to the support team - even though it was on a Sunday!

Before buying we shopped around. We went with 'Easy Fit' and saved around £5,000 - £3,000 on the system and £2,000 on the labour.

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Over the years, self-builders' requirements in terms of glazing have developed somewhat and with this, so have the products available in the marketplace. Although it's still about getting the best of both worlds – high performing products that don't disappoint when it comes to style – both these elements are now being taken to the next level. Thomas Hagen (above) of Internorm discusses this in more detail...

Phase 2 Where next for Glazing?

Of course, a window or door's performance will always continue to be central to the specification process. However, gone are the days where a customer may just go on the fact that it is double glazed; customers are now much more aware of the 'ins and outs' of the system. Double glazed systems can vary hugely in performance and with energy prices continually increasing, customers are now taking into consideration how well the window or door actually retains heat – its thermal performance – while letting in the warmth of the sun – its solar gain.

With this, we are seeing triple and sometimes even quadruple systems being used more and more. In terms of thermal performance, triple glazed windows, for example, have average U-Values of 0.7 W/(m²K) as opposed to 1.4 W/(m²K) on double-glazed. In addition, another key benefit is the promise of a comfortable indoor climate due to the lower cold radiation heat transfer at the surface of the glass.

Selection process

Alongside the move towards triple glazing, the aesthetics of the system also continues to develop. The systems selected for a self-build project can have a huge impact on the overall finish of the property and therefore the right selection is key. More often than not, we see that customers' requirements when it comes to a system's aesthetics really follow what is 'trending' at that time, whether it be a certain colour / finish or the actual design style.

Linking the inside with the outside is a current trend and, for this, lift-sliding doors are ideal. Extra large sizes and special solutions extend the room beyond its real borders and thereby create a new sense of space. With this, a trend towards the use of large frameless glass architecture to create open, bright living environments is also being seen. This style is particularly suited to a homeowner who wants to make the most of a spectacular view.

In answer to this, Internorm has recently launched the PANORAMA HX300 – a new timber / aluminium window triple-glazed system featuring thermal insulation of up to 0.73 W/m²K with soundproofing up to 40 dB. With its ability to be integrated completely into the brickwork, the transition between the frame and glass pane is virtually invisible. The HX300 system also allows for all Internorm timber / aluminium windows (one or two sash) to be integrated where required.

A system such as this requires a number of innovative technical details. These include slim glass joints to allow the inconspicuous transition of large glass areas, almost making the frame disappear completely into the façade, so that literally only the windows and doors are noticeable. This helps maximise the scale of views to the outside. Additional innovative glazing technology, like the 97mm wide glass dividing transoms, ensures increased structural integrity, allowing for large-scale glazing solutions and continuous glass areas of up to 10.5m².

Solar gain issue

When considering large glass areas, too much ►

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Images above and below show Internorm's PANORAMA HX300 system – "The transition between the frame and glass pane is virtually invisible"
Left and previous page: The HS330 timber / aluminium lift-sliding door combines unique design with high-quality technology to achieve living spaces that integrate into the surrounding nature

solar gain can be an issue. This is particularly the case with double-glazing, which achieves more solar gain than triple; 62 per cent as opposed to 50 per cent unless of course the triple glazing has a special coating such as Internorm's Solar+, which takes the solar gain up to 62 per cent.

However, when considering large glass areas, triple glazing without the special coating avoids the issue; the high levels of thermal performance seen with triple glazing can therefore also be benefited from.

Although the drivers behind the specification of windows and doors that are high performance with great design have been consistent, it is clear that self-builders' requirements for both these elements are continually evolving. As a result, products available in the marketplace, including the ones on offer from Internorm, are developing to help meet these changing needs. Thanks to continual innovation, self-builders are now offered unlimited design freedom, allowing design aspirations to become reality ■

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Phase 2
The benefits of high quality fenestration

There are a multitude of benefits to having a well-lit home, for example not only can it improve residents' health and well-being, it can also reduce energy consumption. Here Gary Hutton, general manager at Black Millwork, explores the advantages of high quality fenestration when it comes to creating a bright and healthy interior

For self-builders looking to create their dream home, a bright airy interior is often top of the 'wish list'. Expansive glazed installations are an increasingly popular feature in both new build and refurbishment projects, where they are used to create a seamless transition from outdoors, and inside areas, flooding the property with natural light whilst helping to reduce energy consumption.

Recently, an impressive self-build extension and renovation project incorporated Black Millwork's own range of windows and doors to achieve this sort of effect, contributing to the traditionally finished aesthetics as well as ensuring notable energy efficiency standards were achieved.

Started in March 2013, the project to increase the size of the property from 4,500 to 8,500ft² and from two to three floors of living accommodation was overseen by owner Nick Dowthwaite.

Nick commented: "My family have enjoyed living in this house and it seemed a shame to move when it had so much potential. After deciding how far we were going to extend and getting the basic proportions agreed, it was important to us that the entire building had a coherent style. The fenestration was of the upmost importance to achieve this goal as it had the ability to bring the whole house together. It was also important that the design of the windows and doors fitted in with the natural and traditional finish of the house, tying in with the brick, render and tile. I had seen Black Millwork's products being used locally and knew that the classic timber frames really complimented this style.

"Having made the decision to invest in our current property instead of moving, we didn't want to compromise on the quality of materials – after all, we would be living with the results day in, day out. Also, as we were extending our home on such a large scale, energy efficiency was high on our agenda. The quality and performance of Black Millwork's products were a perfect fit and helped to ensure the comfort and affordability levels of our new home were just right."

Investing in high quality fenestration makes good long-term financial sense for a self-build project, as it increases kerb appeal for future buyers and means less artificial lighting will need to be used inside. With a number of products available on the market that can deliver outstanding U-values, choosing wisely when it comes to fenestration means household energy bills can also be reduced.

For example, timber has long been seen as an aspirational choice for windows and doors, but it is also widely recognised as one of the most efficient natural insulators available. Therefore, when it is combined with technologically advanced glass, timber windows can deliver impressive U-Values – some as low as 1.4W/m²K.

32 of Black Millwork's flush casement windows were installed at Nick's property, offering a simple and traditional design. Manufactured from quality knot-free engineered Baltic Pine and finished in RAL 9013 oyster white.

In addition, four of Black Millwork's French doors and three of its Bi-fold doors were also fitted at the property. With all the doors achieving a minimum U-Value of 1.5 W/m²K, the super efficient performance was continued.

Nick concluded: "I am more than happy with the end result of the project and am particularly impressed with the finished look of the fenestration. Black Millwork was great to work with and delivered all the materials on time – a crucial consideration in any self-build project.

"I am under no illusion that this was a challenging project but with that comes the unique satisfaction that only a self-build project can bring; of knowing you've got exactly what you wanted." ■

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Phase 2 What can the e4 brick house offer the self-build and custom build market?

By Richard Brown, project lead for e4 brick house, at Wienerberger

The Wienerberger e4 brick house is a concept that combines product technology, sustainability credentials and ingenious design. It offers a spacious, affordable blueprint for a house-builder to create the perfect family home.

The concept is Wienerberger's solution to the housing crisis in the UK. The company marshalled all of its expertise in building materials and building technology to create something that could address this major issue. Working alongside global engineering and design consultancy ARUP, the e4 brick house was created according to four founding principles:

Economy: To provide a house that is not only financially affordable and accessible but that gives optimum build performance and meets market demand. It will offer superb value both to builder and buyer.

Energy: The e4 brick house will meet current energy standards and will continue to offer a sustainable environment for its life cycle of 150 years plus. Using a 'fabric first' approach, the house has low embodied energy and is designed for maximum operational efficiency.

Environment: A house that minimises its environmental impact is responsibly sourced and meets Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes as standard.

Emotion: A house that people will want to live in, a house that not only provides flexibility, quality and practicality, but will allow for a higher quality of living. These four principles provide the conceptual core of the e4 brick house, and have informed all of the design and material choices of the blueprint.

The fabric first approach

The Wienerberger e4 brick house is based on a 'fabric first' approach to construction, which naturally played a key part in choosing the materials used. Clay, because of its natural source, durability and 150+ year life cycle, is the dominant material, accounting for the walls and roof fabric. The internal walls utilise Wienerberger's innovative clay block walling system, Porotherm. The overall effect is to create homes with low embodied energy that meets Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes without the need for renewables.

Of course, there are many more advantages to using clay than simply sustainability. It's also the material most associated with the British building vernacular – so for a design that needed to be as accessible as it is sustainable and affordable, it seemed like the obvious choice.

As mentioned, much of the energy efficiency of the house is embedded within the fabrics chosen, so that energy efficiency can be achieved without builders / owners having to invest in renewables. While the embodied carbon impact of the e4 house is likely to be slightly higher than certain ►

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The internal walls utilise Wienerberger's clay block walling system, Porotherm

other construction methods due to its focus on the fabric rather than bolt-on technologies, its operational efficiency and life cycle will mean that it will comfortably outperform other similar constructions.

In comparison to a house designed to meet more demanding Building Regulations energy performance levels surveyed by the National House Building Council (NHBC), the Wienerberger e4 brick house concept would outperform the equivalent in terms of operational carbon emissions over the duration of 120 years by almost 50 per cent.

The e4 brickhouse and self-builders

The e4 brick house is ideal for self-builders or those interested in custom building. It has been designed as a long-term, sustainable property and, as well as being economical to build, offers excellent energy performance over a very long lifetime. It is low maintenance and has a living environment that is both comfortable and easily adaptable to suit people's changing requirements. This combination of short-term advantages in the build stage and the much longer term benefits of living in the property make it the perfect solution to people who want to build their forever home.

An e4 brick house was built at BRE's Innovation Park in Watford and is set to be officially opened this June. Visitors to the BRE Innovation Park will be able to tour the house to get first-hand experience of the e4 concept in practice.

As economy is one of the key principles of the concept, affordability is vital. When constructed in bulk, the standard e4 brick house can be as much as 10 per cent less expensive than building with traditional methods. In terms of the cost of an individual house, it is cost neutral against these methods. However, the affordability of the e4 brick house is not just about the upfront cost of the build. Using the fabric first approach it offers cost savings in terms of energy performance of the property over a much longer period so the e4 house becomes even more affordable. As self-builders and custom builders tend to look beyond just the initial costs of building their home the e4 brick house can actually save them money.

The e4 brick house can be adapted to suit different house types from detached houses to terraced properties as well as different sizes of property

Variety of design

The e4 brick house can be adapted to suit different house types from detached houses to terraced properties and townhouses, as well as different sizes of property. In terms of the space provided, it is deliberately adaptable to a range of demographics, from households with or without children, to older residents. For example, an en suite can be easily incorporated, as can extra bathrooms and alternative bedroom configurations. For growing families, the loft space is designed to be ready-prepared for conversion, creating an extra 20m² of potential living space for minimum cost, and allowing the house to grow in tune with its residents' needs.

In short, the flexibility of design, speed of construction, potential for long-term energy savings and the long life cycle of an e4 brick house make it an excellent option for the self-build and custom build market ■

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Phase 3 Interior & Exterior Finishing

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To keep a watchful eye on your home at all times, CCTV is a good option. App-responsive CCTV kits can be linked up to your TV monitor or router

Phase 3

Let's be smart about home security

Many of us dream of building our own home, from designing the layout and creating the perfect living space, to hunting for those all-important finishing touches; however, there is one important consideration that is often overlooked… home security. David Herbert of Yale looks at the latest home security products on the market and examines the key points you should consider in order to make your new home safe and secure

With apps and smart technologies playing an ever more important role in our everyday lives, securing your home couldn't be easier. According to statistics, one in every five people in the world own a smartphone. This equates to 1.4 billion smartphones being used on a daily basis to organise daily affairs and generally make our lives easier, from shopping for goods and services, to keeping track of our home security.

Smart Locking

Smart Locks offer the very latest in locking technology, allowing you to access and secure your home in a touch of a button. They are ideal for busy families who are often laden down with heavy shopping bags or have absent minded little people who forget their keys, as you can issue a personalised PIN number and if the kids forget theirs you can simply text it to them.

Temporary PINs can also be issued for visitors, which can be especially useful if you have tradespeople visiting your home to carry out work during the second fix stage. The temporary code can be deleted quickly and easily, so there is no need to reveal your family passcode.

Smart protection

According to recent research, 84 per cent of imprisoned burglars said they would not willingly enter a building where a visible alarm was fitted, making home alarms an excellent deterrent for prospective criminals.

Advancements in technology now mean alarms can be activated, deactivated, monitored, or programmed from a smartphone. On top of this, images can be sent directly to your phone to show the cause of the trigger.

Wire-free alarm kits are quick and easy to install and offer protection for all new build projects, from one-bedroom flats to large family homes.

Be smart outdoors

It's also important to think outside the home, as your garden and outbuildings could tempt opportunist criminals.

To protect your new property against thieves, ensure your boundaries are secure and try to avoid leaving expensive equipment lying around. This also applies during the construction phase, so remember to secure tools or building materials inside outbuildings, or fit your shed with a padlock. Some expensive and bulky items may require more than just a simple lock to ensure security, and heavy anchor locks and hasps offer a higher degree of protection, especially when combined with a padlock.

To keep a watchful eye on your home at all times, CCTV is a good option. App-responsive CCTV kits can be linked up to your TV monitor or router, enabling remote viewing from any

Left, right and bottom pic: Smart Locking with Yale's keyless options

Below: Yale's smartphone alarm is one example of the advancements in security technology

location. Images can then be viewed on smartphones or tablets via an app. USB ports also allow the transfer of recorded footage to a USB Flash Drive device, meaning that footage can easily be stored on a PC or supplied to relevant bodies if required, such as the police in the event of a break-in.

Smart social security

Once your build is complete you will no doubt want to share the fruits of your labour; however, before you show off your new home and all your new belongings, take the time to check your Facebook settings to make sure you are only sharing your personal details with 'friends' rather than 'friends of friends' or 'everyone.' By limiting the amount of people you share your personal information with, it is less likely to end up in the wrong hands.

Also be wary of accepting new friends or connections online if you aren't associated with them personally. Make sure you know who they are, rather than just accepting anyone. Burglars can pose as 'friends' to find out more information about you and your home.

Smart for the future

Everyone talks about making a new house your own by hanging pictures and giving each room a lick of paint; but what about making your mark by creating memories?

Photographs, family heirlooms, your children's first paintings… all these things are what make a house a home, and although they may not be of high monetary value, they hold huge amounts of sentimental value and cannot be easily replaced.

By ensuring security remains front of mind during the planning and design process you can relax in your new home, knowing all the special memories it will hold are safe and protected ■

www.yale.co.uk

Phase 3 Opening the door to style this summer

We've asked door expert and JB Kind sales director Simon Johnson to give us a rundown of the most popular door designs, together with his four top tips on what not to forget when you're buying doors

By the time many of you are deciding on what type of internal doors you want for your self-build project, you know that your home is nearly complete – the end is in sight! In theory, you will have planned exactly what door designs you want throughout your new home, however there's an outside chance that your decisions about doors have been waylaid.

So how can you choose cost effective doors without compromising on style, design or quality – and get them delivered in time to complete your project?

Wow with Walnut

Walnut is set to sell this summer. This wood's luxurious feel suits innovative and contemporary interiors and is surprisingly affordable. We're seeing an increase in demand for our Walnut Flush range from interior design professionals, self-builders and consumers. Walnut's rich colour is perfect for adding style and a little bit of warmth to your home.

Awesome Oak

Oak is still extremely popular and you can find a wide range of different door styles on the market to suit your preferred interiors theme as well as budget. For example, our Symmetry Axis Oak door caters for classic and contemporary interiors, and our River Oak Modern and River Oak Cottage ranges are particularly popular with self-builders as their style, flexibility and affordability means they are perfect for barn conversions all the way through to new builds.

Get creative with painted finishes

Contemporary painted finishes combined with a timber graining effect are currently popular thanks to the consistency of look they can provide throughout a home. These types of doors can also make a striking design statement and complement the popular trend for neutral interiors. For example, out of the 200 different door designs we provide, our Eco Colours range fits this description and offers two of this year's best-selling door designs – the Eco Grigio and Eco Mocha.

Don't forget to…

Find out if you need fire doors: Each project is different, but your builder should be able to let you know if, and where, you need fire doors. If you do, is your chosen style available as a fire door? At JB Kind all of our internal door ranges offer fire doors (glazed and non-glazed options) but this isn't the case with all companies.

Consider bi-fold or pocket doors if you're short on space: These space-savers are proving increasingly popular with self-builders as well as the wider market.

Have a budget for ironmongery: Unless you buy a door set for each door, they won't come with hinges, latches or locks! Our advice is to always buy three quality hinges for every door.

Find out if you can receive your doors in time: Check with your door supplier if they have your doors in stock – with so many options there may be a lead time. That's why we have more than 60,000 doors at our warehouse at any one time – we know that there's not always time for advance planning! ■

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Build for *Phase 3* the future by going green

Article from Ice Energy

For years, 'going green' was perceived as the choice of the tree-huggers and hippies, but it seems 'the times they are a changing'. With technological improvements and a growing frustration over energy costs, more people are coming round to the idea that renewables are an investment that can actually pay dividends while also doing their bit for the environment. Heat pumps, for example, can not only provide a total heating and hot water solution, they also qualify for new Government incentives; more on that later...

Choosing which type of heat pump best suits your project will depend on a variety of factors from property size to the amount of land available to you. Ground source heat pumps extract low grade solar heat via pipes (a ground loop) buried in a series of trenches, so having the space available to accommodate these pipes is a key consideration. They are extremely efficient; for every 1kW of energy used to run the heat pump, you can expect to generate up to 4kW of heat. This efficiency can save around £1,500 a year compared to oil for example.

If ground source isn't an option then an air source heat pump is a fantastic alternative. Heat is extracted from the air and processed in the same way as a ground source system, but without the requirement for a ground loop. The heat pump is placed outside your home and like a ground source unit, will provide a total heat and hot water solution.

Both heat pumps qualify for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) which provides regular quarterly income payments direct to your bank account. These are tax-free, index-linked and designed to recoup your installation costs over the seven-year duration of the RHI. The amount you receive varies depending on the amount of renewable heat your system generates and the type of heat pump installed. Ground source heat pumps receive larger payments than air source (19.1p per kWh of renewable energy compared to 7.42p per kWh) which reflects the difference in installation costs.

The RHI does have eligibility criteria to meet including the stipulation that the system and company installing / commissioning it must be Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) registered. No MCS means no RHI, so choosing the right company to design and install your system is as important as the system choice itself.

Don't be afraid to ask the right questions; how many heat pumps have you installed? do you have the right accreditations? have you got customers I can speak to? do you have case study examples for a property like mine? If they're not prepared, or are unable to answer these questions, then they're probably not the right company for you.

With the right choice of product and company, heat pumps can eradicate your dependence on fossil fuels, provide an ongoing income stream and long-term fuel savings, while benefiting the planet ■

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For many, the fireplace has always been the heart of the home. A central place where the family can quietly relax, reflect and spend time together. Tim Pockett from Gazco explains that with the ease and convenience of gas, you can create a fireplace that ticks all your boxes

Eclipse 100 Edge with Ledgestone effect lining

Phase 3
Home is where the hearth is

With their comforting charm and aesthetic appeal, fireplaces form the centrepiece in many homes. Regularly appearing in the top five on lists of desirable home features, they not only provide a warming ambience on cold winter evenings but can transform an interior.

For those looking for the natural glow of real flames with ultimate ease, a gas fire is a great option. Featuring realistic, hand painted logs with glowing embers, as well as beautifully crafted brickwork linings, it can be difficult to tell them apart from solid-fuel fires.

Not requiring a conventional fireplace or chimney, many gas fires offer greater possibilities when designing or building your home. By using a balanced flue, fires like the Studio Slimline can be installed in a variety of locations such as an internal leaf or even a cavity wall. Employing a twin walled pipe that can either exit horizontally through an external wall or vertically through the roof, air is drawn in through the outer pipe whilst the inner pipe removes combustion gases – negating the need for a conventional chimney.

Technical advancements

Thanks to technical advancements resulting in both improved efficiency and heat output, gas fires are a practical option for heating your home. Providing instant warmth, they can often be controlled from the comfort of an armchair using a remote control. In addition, some models even incorporate programmable thermostatic timers, letting you arrive home to a warming hearth.

Offered in a variety of styles to suit a wide range of tastes, gas fires can be tailored to fit almost any interior. For those with classic tastes, the versatile Riva2 models can be combined with a stone mantel and brick lining, creating a classic fireplace aesthetic. Alternatively, modern glass or steel framing options as well as hole-in-the-wall styles allow gas fires to fit perfectly into modern interiors.

Presence and output

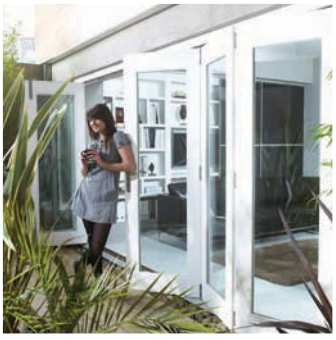
However, one of the most important factors to consider when choosing a gas fire is size. If you are planning to add a fire to an open plan setting or larger room, make sure that it has both the presence to become the visual centrepiece and the heat output to match. With their 9.5kW output, models such as the Eclipse are easily able to heat bigger areas – from expansive kitchen-diners to lofty mezzanines.

Choosing the right fire to suit your needs is essential, and with so many options available it's always best to get some help from an expert retailer. They will be able to advise you on the various technical aspects of selecting and installing your fire, as well as guide you through the style options and features available to you ■

www.stovax .com

Studio 1 Slimline Expression logs with Brick effect lining

Riva2 750 brick effect in Claremont mantel portrait



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Phase 3
Classic, country or contemporary,
Shaker
style has it all

By Graeme Smith, senior designer at Second Nature Kitchens

The pure simplicity of the Shaker design makes it timeless, with its clean lines and honest style offering the perfect backdrop to create a classic, country or even modern look in your kitchen scheme. It's an extremely versatile design, achieving so much yet giving the impression that it's an effortless look that will continue to look fresh in years to come. 'Less is more' perfectly encapsulates the Shaker ethos, creating a calm and comforting interior that can be dressed up or down to suit your style and taste. So how has this essentially simple and enduring design become the darling of the kitchen? It's quite simple, clean-lined and elegant, Shaker-inspired kitchens are both easy to live in and easy to look after.

Country style

If you favour a country ambience in your kitchen then use the Shaker cabinetry as the base and build up the look with layers of texture, colour and accessories. Elements that will evoke a traditional artisan feel include free-standing furniture pieces, open plate racks, tongue and grooved panelling and glazed doors. Opt for a colour and material palette that's inspired by nature, such as sage green cabinetry and travertine stone floor and wall tiles. Warm oak timber is an essential ingredient to add a rustic hint to the scheme, plus a selection of mis-matched chairs will help to create the informal, cosy-country style with an atmosphere that's both welcoming and utterly charming. (see below right)

Classic style

If you prefer an interior that's classic and elegant then opt for an understated neutral for the Shaker cabinetry, such as stone or almond. This will immediately set the scene, with a base colour that will team beautifully with a considered mix of other tones and materials. The classic look is synonymous with an understated palette where the colours blend in a subtle way, rather than having bold accents. A tonal scheme can be hard to beat, where the wall, cabinetry and floor colours have a common theme. However, it's important to avoid any sense of blandness so introduce contrast in elements such as the worktops, pendant lighting or dining furniture. Black granite worksurfaces are a popular choice for a classic kitchen, but consider softening the look with a lighter shade of grey for a more refined feel. (see above)

Shaker style is also ideal to create a contemporary look for your kitchen, but one that certainly won't become a victim of fashion. Choosing a fresh light grey for the cabinetry will not only instantly inject a modern edge but is the perfect colour to use as a base to add plenty of personality with other materials and products, so don't be afraid to blend a mix of two, or even three, worktop finishes. In a modern design go bold and introduce a zingy accent colour to accessorise the kitchen. Splashes of colour will prevent any danger of the room becoming too clinical or unfriendly, such as solid surface worktops in 'banana' Hi-Macs will add a fresh and vibrant feature. And as kitchens increasingly have to be multi-functional living zones, make the most of the space by creating a multi-purpose table, perfect for dining but also to double up as an office area. Whatever the style you choose for your kitchen, always consider storage carefully, not just thinking of the obvious places to stash pots, pans, crockery and food, but also more decorative storage to display chosen pieces, racks for recipe books and even a lower level unit for toys, games or homework. (see top right)

Second Nature's Milbourne Shaker range has an overpainted foil construction and is an affordable alternative to a painted timber door. However due to its visual appeal, subtle grained finish and tactile authenticity, it really has the look and feel of painted timber. Milbourne kitchens are priced from £10,000 and available nationwide from independent Second Nature retailers:
www.sncollection.co.uk t:01325 505539 ■

Image left: Milbourne Stone;
Above: Milbourne Partridge Grey;
This pic: Milbourne Sage

Phase 3 How do you Lay yours?

When it comes to constructing a floor most builders perceive there to be two broad options, but they are wrong. Damon McEwan, from James Hardie, looks at the different structural flooring options available to self-builders and explains why he feels the cheaper option is definitely not best in terms of performance, plus is also lacking when it comes to overall value

Typically in self-build and renovation projects much thought goes into floor coverings, with few people considering the actual structural floor itself with many perceiving there to be limited options: solid or precast concrete and suspended timber. However, this is wrong as there is now another option – a hybrid of all the traditional systems. This new system really gives self-builders some food for thought as it can have a significant impact on the project in the long term.

The new system, HardieFloor by James Hardie, used favourably in countries such as New Zealand and Australia, comprises patented fibre cement tongue-and-groove boards that can be used as a replacement for timber and both solid and precast concrete.

Up until the 1970s suspended timber floors were the flooring structure of choice for most house-builders whether constructing a ground or intermediate floor. It is still the system of choice throughout much of Scotland given the tendency to build timber frame houses north of the border. In England, however, it is different; contractors building flats and luxury homes are now using concrete for all floors but volume contractors building single units are still using timber intermediate floors, but tend to use concrete for the ground floors.

The main attraction of utilising chipboard and plywood is that it is cheaper to buy at the outset than concrete and it is easy to work with. But, just because it is a less expensive upfront investment does not mean it is the cheapest option when the entire project is taken into consideration.

Timber boards are pervious to the weather and in the UK that can bring about a whole host of problems. When the boards become wet and consequently dry out they contract and expand. A change in the size of floorboards is the principle cause of creaking floors; the most frequent noise related complaint made to the NHBC. This is a complaint which often occurs after a building project is complete, meaning frequently builders have to return to completed jobs to carry out costly remedial works.

Floor coverings

When working with timber flooring it is important to know what floor covering will be used as only a small number of floor coverings can be laid directly onto the timber boards. Typically tiles do not work well with timber because the movement that can occur in the boards results in cracked tiles and grout. This is a major disadvantage for house-builders because nowadays a tile option is almost always a requirement to sell a home, particularly in bathrooms; the area of a house where the timber floor is most likely to suffer from water damage.

Some builders do take the risk of tiling on to ►

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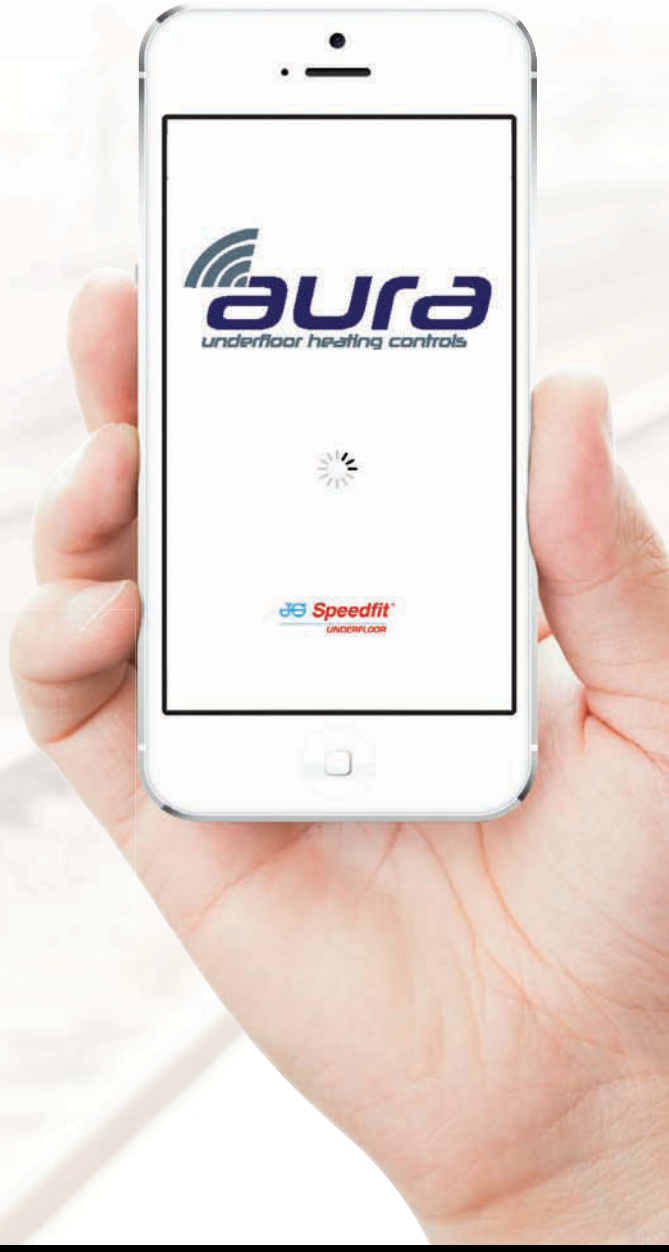

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AS BRITISH AS THE DAY IT WAS BORN

HardieFloor by James Hardie comprises patented fibre cement tongue-and-groove boards that can be used as a replacement for timber and both solid and precast concrete

wooden floors but it is not as simple as adhering tiles onto the boards. Additional boards, adhesives and membranes are required, bringing about an increase in both material and installation costs.

Solid and precast concrete have traditionally been seen as the strongest and most reliable flooring systems, especially when it comes to soundproofing. Both systems can be used with a multitude of floor coverings in any room of the house and they do not react to the weather. However, there is no hiding from the fact that they are the most expensive options and also the most difficult to work with in terms of logistics.

Concrete, whether precast or solid, is difficult to use on sites with restricted access. In order to use a precast concrete system for intermediary floors it is necessary to have a crane on site to lift the beams into place. If concrete is used for the ground floor it would be necessary for a mixer truck to have access to the site, something which is not always possible given the tight dimensions of modern day building sites.

HardieFloor fibre cement structural boards

The traditional systems all have their benefits but they also have their weaknesses. Many of these weaknesses have been addressed by the new entrant to the structural flooring systems market: the HardieFloor fibre cement structural boards. These boards give contractors the option of having all of the typical benefits of concrete floors such as strength, robustness and water resistance, but with the ease and speed of a timber install. In comparison to concrete and precast it is much lighter, faster to install as well as being cheaper. It is also easy to use on sites with restricted access that cannot take the dead load of a concrete slab or precast floor.

Unlike timber, fibre cement boards are completely weather resistant; they dry out if wet and suffer no long term damage thus avoiding creaking floorboards and the associated costs of call backs. Similar to concrete, fibre cement can be used throughout a property without having to consider floor coverings; even tiles can be applied directly to the boards without the need for additional membranes and adhesives giving builders the flexibility to be able to offer a tiled floor finish without the need of costly additional preparatory and finishing work.

In the past, builders have only ever had two choices: concrete and precast or suspended timber, and there has never been an in-between product to close the gap. Now though, builders and self-builders can achieve the very best in terms of workmanship and materials regardless of build type or site ■

www.jameshardie.co.uk

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Phase 3 Big results from discrete home system

Your Build takes a look at a discrete, connected home system for a new-build eco-property in North-West London from integrator James + Giles which seamlessly controls audio-visual, lighting, security and energy management systems in the property for convenience and comfort…

James + Giles' client for this project wanted the latest technology to meet the demands of modern family life, complement the minimalist interior of the property and help meet the low energy credentials required for a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) home. This challenging brief was ably met by James + Giles with a winning specification combining KNX technology integrated with Control4 to provide a ground-breaking level of control, embracing HVAC, lighting, security, intercom, solar shading and audio-visual distribution with the minimum of fuss and intrusion.

"The client was keen to retain the home's Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and BREEAM Eco-homes rating of 'Very Good'," said Giles Sutton, director of James + Giles. "Our efficient system successfully manages the chief low energy features, including the heat-recovery ventilation, heating and solar-shading, alongside lighting, security and home entertainment."

In an open plan house, built as a series of split-level floors and with such a clean aesthetic, concealment of the technology was extremely important. Most of the walls and floors are made from solid concrete or glass, so embedding the cabling and technology was either impractical or impossible.

The James + Giles solution made use of a 'chimney' running through the core of the home which provided the ideal location for the service run of cabling and HVAC components, as well as providing handy storage space for the family. In the main living space this central core also houses a discretely positioned flat screen TV, and behind a detachable acrylic panel, a soundbar and subwoofer, which blends with the panels when not in use. The screen is future-proofed, in that upcoming Panasonic models are guaranteed to fit the current frame size if the family opt to upgrade.

Lighting scheme

A close collaboration with lighting designer Firefly produced an energy-efficient and visually stunning lighting scheme, controlled by KNX using a range of low voltage dimming methods including the DALI protocol (more often associated with commercial projects). This bus-based system also removed the need for multiple, complex gateways and interfaces. With its distributed intelligence, the KNX system offers greater reliability than a centralised lighting system and required fewer controls. The integrated combination of thermostat and lighting switches are a key feature of the KNX system, ►

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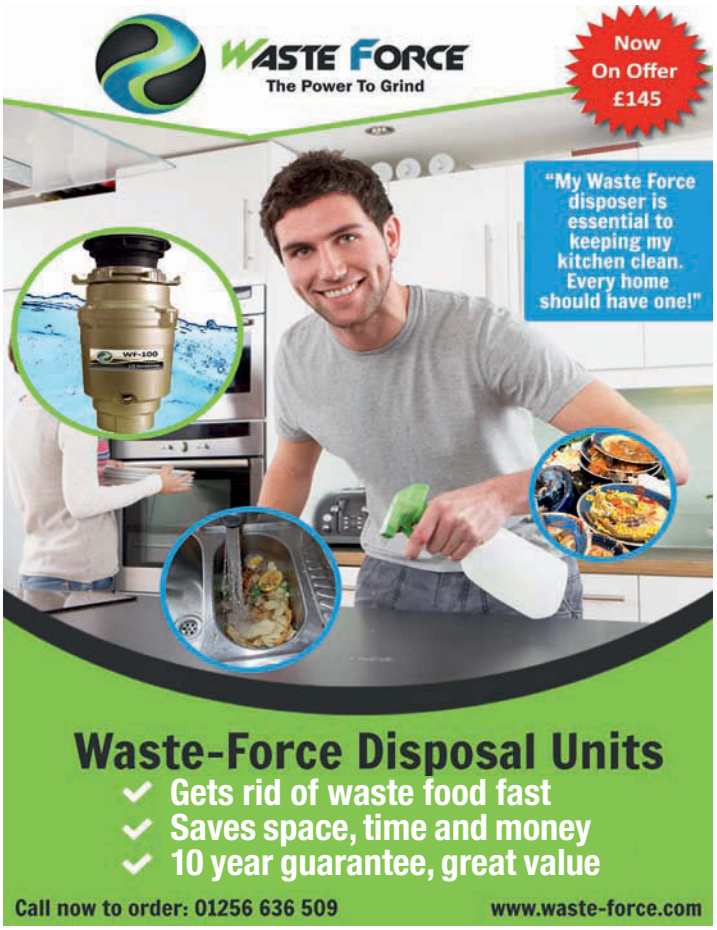

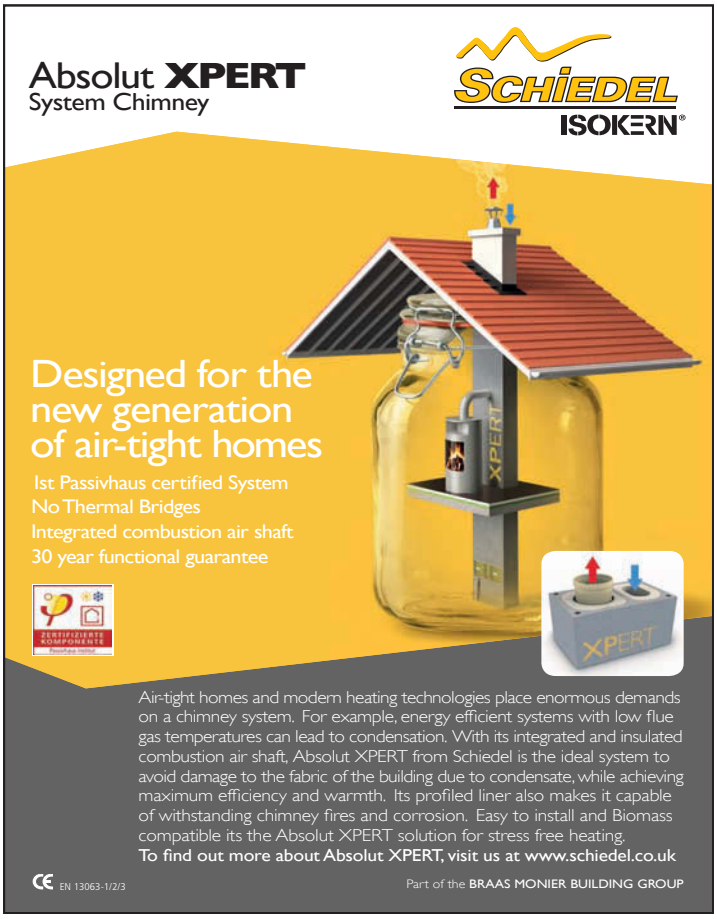

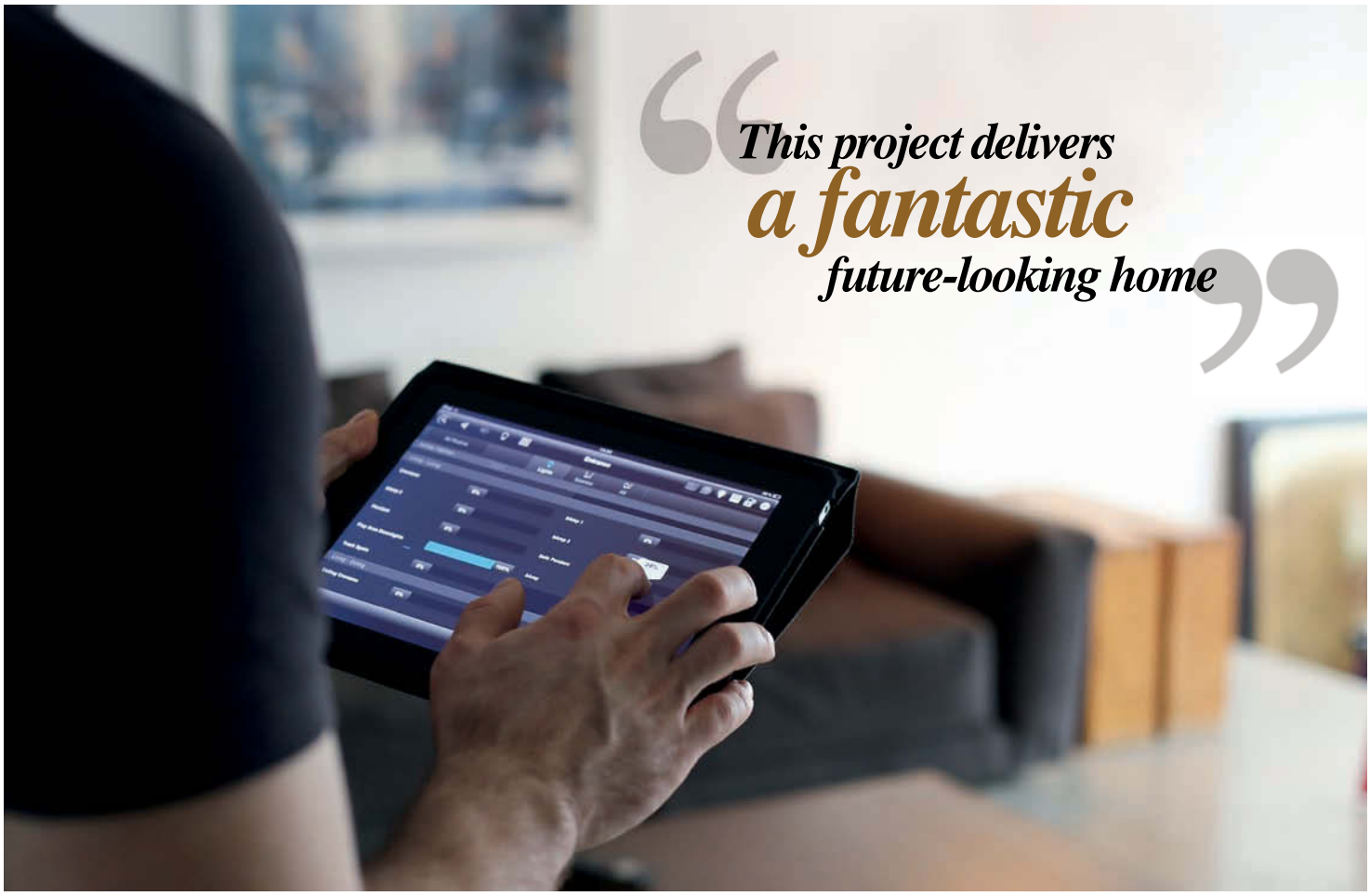

as they control both temperature and lighting with a different sequence of buttons and no need for separate temperature sensors.

The downstairs family media room features a projector, facing the discrete white wall 'screen', and accesses Blu-ray, Sky and various networked audio sources. The room is also used for entertaining, parties and live music, with its integral bar area, drum kit and piano.

Energy-saving options

In the media room, and around the house, James + Giles has ensured the technology is readily adaptable for the future. Along with the green roofs and rainwater harvesting, the company has installed cabling for a weather station to allow for more energy saving options.

Using KNX, James + Giles maximises the home's slow energy features to help achieve its BREEAM rating. With Control 4 remotes and the app, the client can operate all the sub-systems in the house from touchscreen, iPad or phone. Meanwhile, a discrete plant room is home to the technology hub which stores equipment alongside the KNX/Control4 managed HVAC system.

With all this high-quality technological performance and energy efficiency melding so perfectly with the superior architectural design, it is no wonder the client is delighted with his new "green-meets-cool" home. This project delivers a fantastic future-looking home and shows how audio-visual, lighting, security and energy management can work in harmony ■

Contact James + Giles: 0207 250 1001
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The client wanted the latest technology to meet the demands of modern family life, complement the minimalist interior and help meet the low energy credentials of a BREEAM home

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The Apollo Suite

Phase 3

Bathroom focus: Limited space layouts and tile solutions

Better Bathrooms offers advice on how to achieve the best layout design for your small bathroom, plus some key tile tips to help achieve the best finish for your bathroom project…

In this article we will consider the best layout ideas for your small bathroom design, including cloakroom bathrooms, ensuites and small main bathrooms.

Cloakroom bathroom

The ultimate in tiny bathrooms, a cloakroom bathroom can be hard to furnish. Constructed from space 'stolen' from other rooms, or squeezed in under a staircase, many downstairs cloakrooms are both small and awkwardly shaped.

To make use of every bit of space, you need to get into every corner – literally. Get your small bathroom design off to an easy start with a corner bathroom suite like our stylish and streamlined Arc design suite (below right), which with its corner toilet and corner basin can help you squeeze every centimetre of usable floor space out of your cloakroom.

Ensuite

To create a functional separate ensuite, a purely practical approach to both sanitaryware selection and layout ideas is often the solution.

A modern, space-saving design with clean lines like our Micro corner cloakroom suite looks good and will fit neatly into a range of small spaces thanks to the short projection toilet and corner basin, but its design doesn't, perhaps, have the flourish you'd be looking for if you were fitting the same size suite into a bedroom setting.

Ok, in a bedroom / bathroom scenario the toilet won't be in full view, but your washbasin and other elements of your ensuite design, like a shower enclosure or freestanding bath, are likely to form part of the backdrop to your bedroom, so the sanitaryware in a shared space ensuite needs to have a little presence.

Enter the Prima cloakroom pack (below left). The WC is space saving leaving room for the more interesting elements of your design, and the basin has a clearly defined curve which sets it apart from many similarly proportioned sinks: the Prima is a tiny cloakroom suite that's big on style.

Small main bathroom

While a cloakroom needs just a toilet and basin, and an ensuite can be styled as a wet room or equipped with a small corner shower in order to serve its purpose, a home's main bathroom needs to be kitted out for every eventuality.

This can make a lack of floor space seem like much more of a challenge, but there are ways to squeeze in all the essentials without sacrificing that all-important sense of space.

Small, 'go-with-anything' modern suites like our Plaza 325 cloakroom suite are best sellers in part because they cover the basics without any wasted space, leaving you room to squeeze in a shower bath – making your family's shower lovers and 'bath-a-holics' equally happy – spoil yourself with a super-sized shower, or splurge on a slipper bath.

Different spaces; similar approaches – but make it work for you

Although the three bathroom spaces we've looked at here have been different spaces for different uses, you'll have noticed a theme running through all three – the compact bathroom suite. Every small bathroom design needs a toilet and basin – and small spaces require space saving solutions.

But your bathroom needs to work for you. Maybe you'd love a spa bath? or you dream of a steam shower? play around with layout ideas and choose the right space-saving sanitaryware to turn your small bathroom design into your dream bathroom.

Prima Cloakroom Pack

Arc Corner Bathroom Suite

Smart tile solutions

Below: Marbella Gris Relieve Wall Tile and the Sabbia Wall Tile

Below: Onix Ice Tiles; Below right: Classic Beige Square Travertine Tiles

Tiled bathroom ideas

Choosing the decor for a new bathroom can feel like hard work, and with so many tile designs and types to choose from, it's hard to know what will work best in your home.

Don't panic, though! these tiled bathroom ideas should give you the information and inspiration you need to tile your ideal bathroom.

Which parts of my bathroom should be tiled?

When it comes to choosing which bits of your bathroom to tile, you have a range of options.

1. Fully tiled

Coordinated wall and floor tiles, covering the bathroom floor and each of the walls up to the ceiling. You can go for a single, large format tile for a simple, sleek finish, or add interest by picking out sections with smaller (mosaic) or patterned tiles. Some of the best and most deceptively simple tiled bathroom ideas culminate in a fully tiled finish, with areas of texture or colour to bring a touch of the owner's personality to the space.

2. Partially tiled walls and floor

As above, but your wall tiles will generally reach from the floor to anywhere from around half height up to perhaps 50cm short of the ceiling. The latter look is particularly popular in period homes where some rooms will have a picture rail at this height. Where you stop will depend upon the features in your room and the height of your ceiling.

3. Tiled walls only

Fully or partly tiled walls paired with an alternate flooring material such as wood, bamboo or luxury vinyl flooring.

4. Tiled wet areas

The bathroom walls are mainly painted and only the wet areas – alongside the bath, in the shower enclosure and above or around the basin – are tiled. Adding only a few small sections of tile means that if you wish you can choose a dramatic colour or pattern to make your splashbacks really stand out.

Which type of tile to choose?

Ultimately your choice of tile will come down to personal preference. There are a few factors to bear in mind when making your choice, however.

Natural stone tiles

Natural stone tiles, such as our classic beige travertine tiles, look beautiful when properly cared for and are a great choice either for a classic period bathroom scheme, or for a serene and neutral contemporary space.

They will, however, generally require more maintenance than man-made (porcelain or ceramic) tiles. Natural stone will need sealing before the bathroom is used and this sealant will need to be periodically re-applied. You'll also need to be careful with your choice of bathroom cleaner: acidic cleaners will etch natural stone, dulling its beauty, while abrasive cleaners can scratch its delicate surface.

If you choose a rough surface tile – such as tumbled travertine – you'll find that it is hard to clean thoroughly and that in wet areas (such as the shower), dirt can build up in the little grooves on your tile's surface.

Ceramic and porcelain tiles

Easy care ceramic and porcelain tiles come in a dazzling array of styles and sizes. From stone effect shades to metallic finishes, dramatic blacks and dazzling whites to rich patterns and vibrant colours, there is something for everyone – whatever your style. This type of tile especially complements contemporary spaces.

From a subtly patterned black-on-black, perfect for a striking feature wall such as our Absolute Black Polished Porcelain wall / floor tile, to our contemporary neutral light grey wall and floor tiles like Ego Ice, to the stunning simplicity of a matt white textured tile such as Ardosia Perola slate effect wall and floor tiles, our huge selection of gorgeous bathroom tiles is sure to give you more than a few ideas for your ideal tiled bathroom ■

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Phase 4 Groundwork & Landscaping

In this section...

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Dennis Scarth says don't leave it too late to think about your outdoor project

90 Richard Burbidge
Paul Martin outlines the key considerations to make sure your decking is right first time

94 IronmongeryDirect
Jamie Johnson explains the hardware you'll need to build a fence that lasts

Phase 4
Getting to grips with the GARDEN

The final piece of your self-build jigsaw is the garden and landscape. In the last of this four-part series, Dennis Scarth, self-build sales director at builders' merchant Jewson, explains why it is worth thinking about this phase as early as possible to ensure a successful scheme, and what you should be taking into account so that it brings something special to your project

It is important not to leave this phase of your project until the interior is complete, it really will save both time and your all-important budget if you plan ahead. You may have had to submit initial concepts at the planning application stage, but if not, definitely get designing before the groundworks are finished to make best use of any machinery you are hiring for digging, levelling, shaping and lifting.

Landscaping is a fantastic opportunity to frame your house in an attractive, practical way that makes the most of space and natural features. But, before making any decisions, think first about what it is you want your garden to be; a place to play or be peaceful? a space to be social or a gardener's delight?

By laying the foundations on paper before you have even put a spade in the ground you will be halfway to getting the job done right. If you do not feel confident in designing your garden and landscape yourself, you could commission a landscape gardener. Alternatively, enlist the help of our landscaping experts who, with a bank of knowledge, intuitively understand how your space can be utilised and maximised for best effect. They can advise on what materials should be used and the best products for a particular application. Here are some of the things you need to consider to achieve professional results.

The importance of ground preparation

Before placing any new landscaping materials or sowing seeds on rough earth, it is important to prepare the ground.

Laying a fabric membrane prevents weed growth without using toxic chemicals, but the fabric allows water and nutrients to pass, so the ground isn't lifeless and your preferred plants are healthy and uncluttered with no unsightly weeds popping up into your paths.

Garden walling – improves security, privacy and weather protection

Building a garden or other exterior wall is a popular permanent way to mark borders, contain specific areas, reinforce earthworks, encourage climbing plants or simply enclose your new self-build home to improve security and privacy while reducing disruption and damage by wind.

Dependent on the look of the wall you are erecting, your local builders' merchant should offer a range of walling supplies to suit your style be it rustic, classic or contemporary. Look out too for the matching stonework for pillars, steps, coping and caps, balls and decorative features to add the finishing touches to your landscaping layout. Remember, a wall will need foundations but does provide a more permanent structure.

Fencing – an alternative or complement to walling

Choosing between a wall and a fence can be visual preference or simply down to budget. In terms of finish there are options from the more traditional such as the New England picket, fence to more formal spear-topped black ironwork, or a variety of lapboard panels with decorative capping. Fencing runs can also feature associated gates and trellises to create those finishing design touches.

Garden structures for storage, work space, play space or simply a focal point

Increasingly, gardens are being used to create that extra storage not only for traditional gardening equipment but also bikes, toys and garden furniture. Another growing trend, with working routines changing and more people home working, is the creation of an outdoor office space.

Find a builders' merchant that stocks a selection of storage options such as wooden and secure metal sheds in a choice of different sizes and styles for your garden. Or for a more

complex project like creating an outdoor home office or workshop, seek help from the merchant's experts on the best way to achieve this.

If you are looking to add focal points to your outdoor space, consider garden structures that make use of right-angled corners or straight borders, rounded designs for central areas and striking curved upright walkways. Arbours offer you a place of shelter and comfort from which to enjoy your garden, whilst arches can give cover and be used as an attractive plant-climbing frame.

Sustainability and timber protection

For many self-builders it is important to build as sustainably as possible, so check that your fencing products are certified by the FSC as these are sourced from sustainable origins and remember to speak to merchant staff about Chain of Custody certification. This identifies timber that is sourced from 'legal' and well-managed forests.

Search out a timber supplier that offers products that are pressure-treated to protect against water ingress and rot, and if required look for different colour timber finish options as well as woodstain and paint finishes.

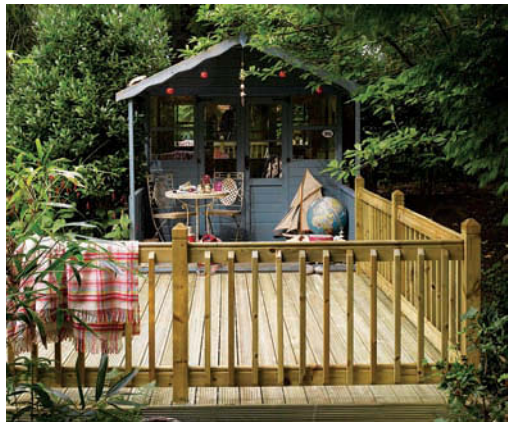
Be prepared for best results

With careful planning summerhouses, decking, paved walkways and patios can quickly turn an empty space into an appealing place to be. To achieve professional results, make your garden and general landscaping a priority early on in your self-build journey. Visit your local builders' merchant and discuss your design ideas and explore the options available. Get advice on how best to build your different features within your budget, and get help with scheduling your order.

At Jewson we have specialist landscaping centres which offer a wide selection of materials and products such as fencing, paving slabs, decking, edgings and gates. They also showcase numerous garden structures such as arbours and arches, sheds and summerhouses ■

To find your nearest Jewson Landscaping Centre visit: www.jewsonlandscaping.co.uk/landscaping-centres or to speak to a Jewson self-build advisor or book a visit on site, call our self-build helpline Tel: 0800 032 8968

Far left: The Classic decking balustrades range; Left: Classic range with glass infill; Below: Classic range with American timber balusters



Phase 4
Make your garden your masterpiece

Paul Martin of Richard Burbidge says decking is an attractive, versatile and affordable addition to any garden, and creates a family-friendly and easy to maintain space for dining, relaxing or entertaining. Here, he explains how to make the most of your decking project

When it comes to home improvement, the garden is one place where simple changes can make a big difference. Whether you're looking to create an outdoor focal point or maximise your available space with a place for alfresco entertaining, decking is an ideal way to improve your home, and increase value when it comes to resale.

Design and preparation

Careful design and preparation is key when planning your decking. Start by walking around your garden to visualise how a deck will look. Consider where the sun will be at different times of the day, if your deck will be sheltered from prevailing winds by fences, walls or buildings and whether there are any changes in ground level that need to be addressed.

Once you have decided on a location for your deck, measure the site carefully. This will help you to produce a good working drawing and make it easier to determine the materials you will require. Also remember to include additional design considerations in your drawing, such as boundaries, trees, buildings and borders.

As with any home extensions, your decking should be in keeping with the look and feel of your home. As a result, size is an important consideration when designing your deck. Oversized decking on smaller houses or in compact outdoor space can look out of place, while smaller decking areas in larger grounds can look equally incongruous. In addition, if you are planning on using your deck for outdoor dining, make sure it is big enough to accommodate garden tables, chairs and benches.

Once you have decided on a location for your decking, plan your deckboard design carefully, as laying patterns can impact on the overall appearance. Laying the boards at different angles or in patterns can add texture and interest to your deck.

Once the base of your deck has been laid you then need to consider the balustrades. This is an extremely effective way of adding personality, style and interest to your deck, in keeping with the overall design of your garden.

What's your garden style?

For cottage gardens and older properties, Richard Burbidge's traditional collection is an ideal option. It comes with a choice of handrails, three newel styles and six different types of infill. These include the straight lines and strong angles of the square baluster system; the simple, minimalist design of the stop chamfered system; and the decorative appeal of the timber panel system.

For spacious, family gardens, the classic range is ideal. Featuring a selection of design options in wood, metal and glass, from the sturdy feel of the square baluster system, to the distinctive ornamentation of the metal baluster system, ►

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The Classic system

and the American system with its chunky rail, baluster and square newels, there is something to suit every taste.

Alternatively, for contemporary gardens why not consider Richard Burbidge's FUSION system, combining round hardwood handrails with aluminium rails and newels. Simple to install, it comes with 8mm toughened safety glass panels for a contemporary look that makes the most of a garden view while creating a feeling of safety and space.

Finishing touches

Plants are a perfect addition; for lighter timbers, why not go for a tropical look with bamboo and palm grasses? Alternatively, for a softer country garden feel, try growing clematis or trailing plants around your balustrade.

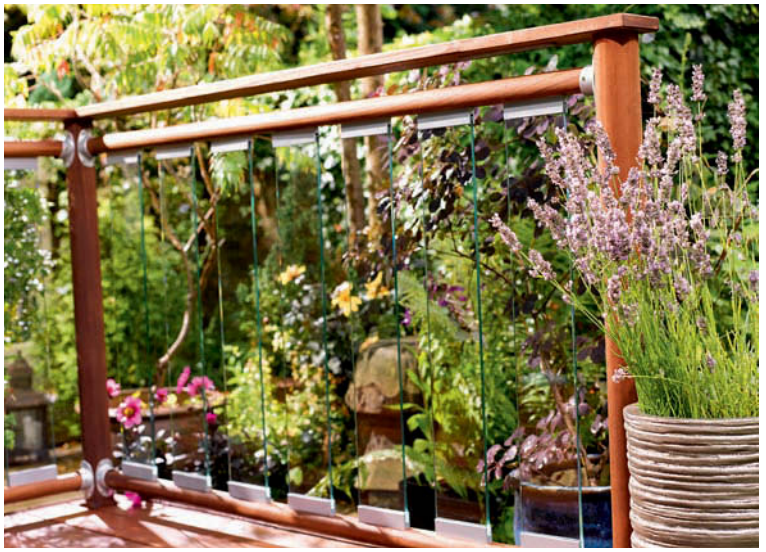
Outdoor lighting can also be used to great effect, creating the right ambience and turning your deck into an outdoor space that can be enjoyed day and night. Weave subtle lighting through the balustrade to create an ethereal atmosphere or, for a bolder look, opt for brightly coloured glass and metallic lanterns.

Finally, garden furniture can help to transform your deck into a stylish and practical living space, creating the perfect setting for alfresco dining during the summer evenings. For smaller decks, choose more intimate furniture sets or, for larger spaces, use loungers and outdoor floor cushions for a relaxed, bohemian feel.

As the average house size shrinks, every inch of available living space is becoming more important. Outdoor decking is one of the easiest solutions when it comes to adding perceived value to your build and maximizing space. Outdoor balustrade systems allow you to create a bespoke look and feel, creating the perfect space for dining, relaxing or entertaining during the long summer months.

To make decking design easy, Richard Burbidge's online Deckplanner tool guides you through the planning process, allowing you to plan your perfect decking system in just a few simple steps ■

www.deckplanner.co.uk



Left: The Contemporary range includes round spindle and glass panel systems

Left: The Traditional square baluster system

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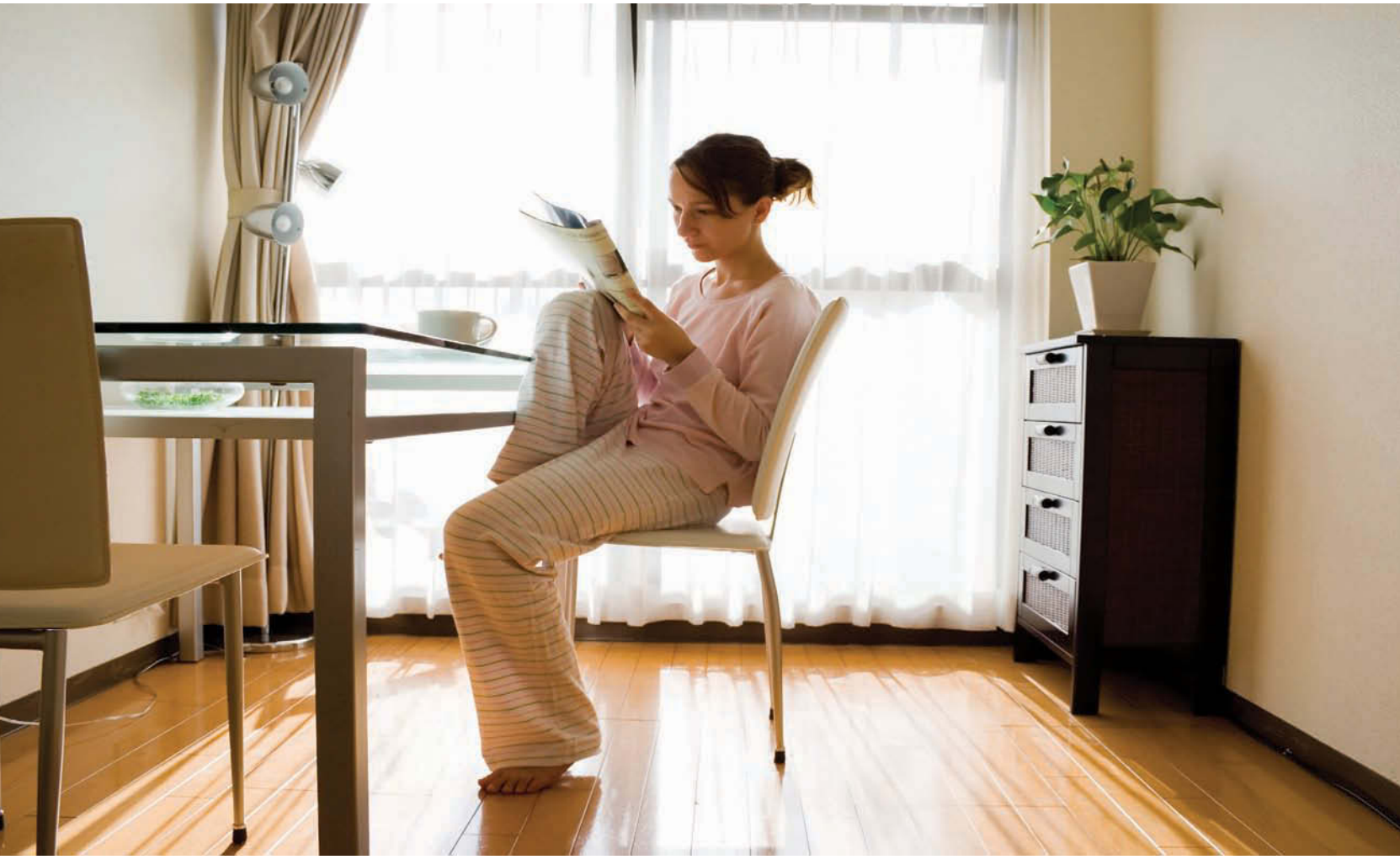

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Phase 4 A fence that will last

A quality, aesthetically appealing fence can help to enhance your property's kerb appeal whilst also providing extra security. It needs to be strong and able to withstand the various weather conditions that it may be subjected to. As well as a quality fence, you need to consider the various pieces of hardware that will ensure your fence stands the test of time. Jamie Johnson, product manager at IronmongeryDirect, takes a look at the hardware that you need to enhance the longevity and durability of the fence

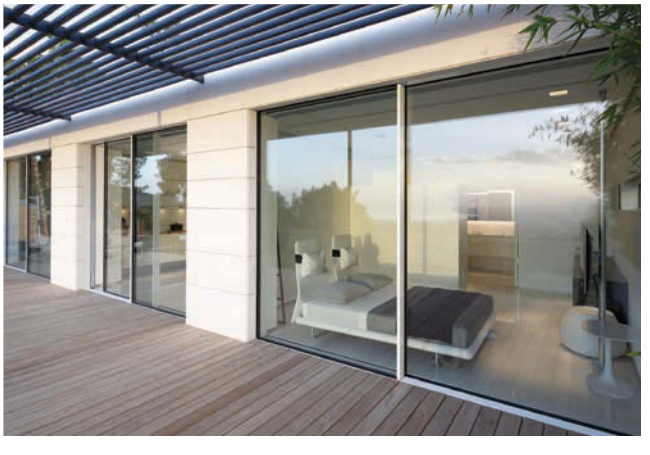
Placing a fence around your garden can help to make your garden feel more private and offer a safe place for children to play and family members to gather. When choosing to make this addition to your property, the materials needed to construct it – for example hardware components – are extremely important when thinking about the future of your investment. This is especially significant if you live in an area that is subject to extreme weather conditions, such as by the sea where it may be very wet and windy.

To ensure that your fence has a long life and will withstand these conditions, it needs to be properly installed and constructed using the right, quality hardware. For example, it needs to have strong supports and sturdy posts will help to keep the fence standing tall. Investing in post hardware that is hard-wearing and resistant to corrosion will prevent it from warping and rotting, and should help to keep the fence in place. Otherwise the post may split or pull away from the fence resulting in the fence becoming less stable.

Fence post spikes

Fence post spikes are a good product to use to ensure that the post is firmly secured into the ground. The Powapost Drive-In Fence Post Spike (*left*) makes installation of fencing quick and simple as it is pushed into the ground with no digging required. The spike is designed to mechanically tighten around the post using bolts so that it fits securely around the post and is easy to remove at a later date if required. It is manufactured from zinc-plated, heavy duty mild steel and coated with a hard-wearing powder coat to ensure maximum durability. This stops it from eroding and protects the post from water, fungal and insect damage.

To also prevent the post from rotting, fence post caps should be added to the top. These items help to protect the top of the post from rain and moisture and they also provide a decorative finish to the post as well. ►



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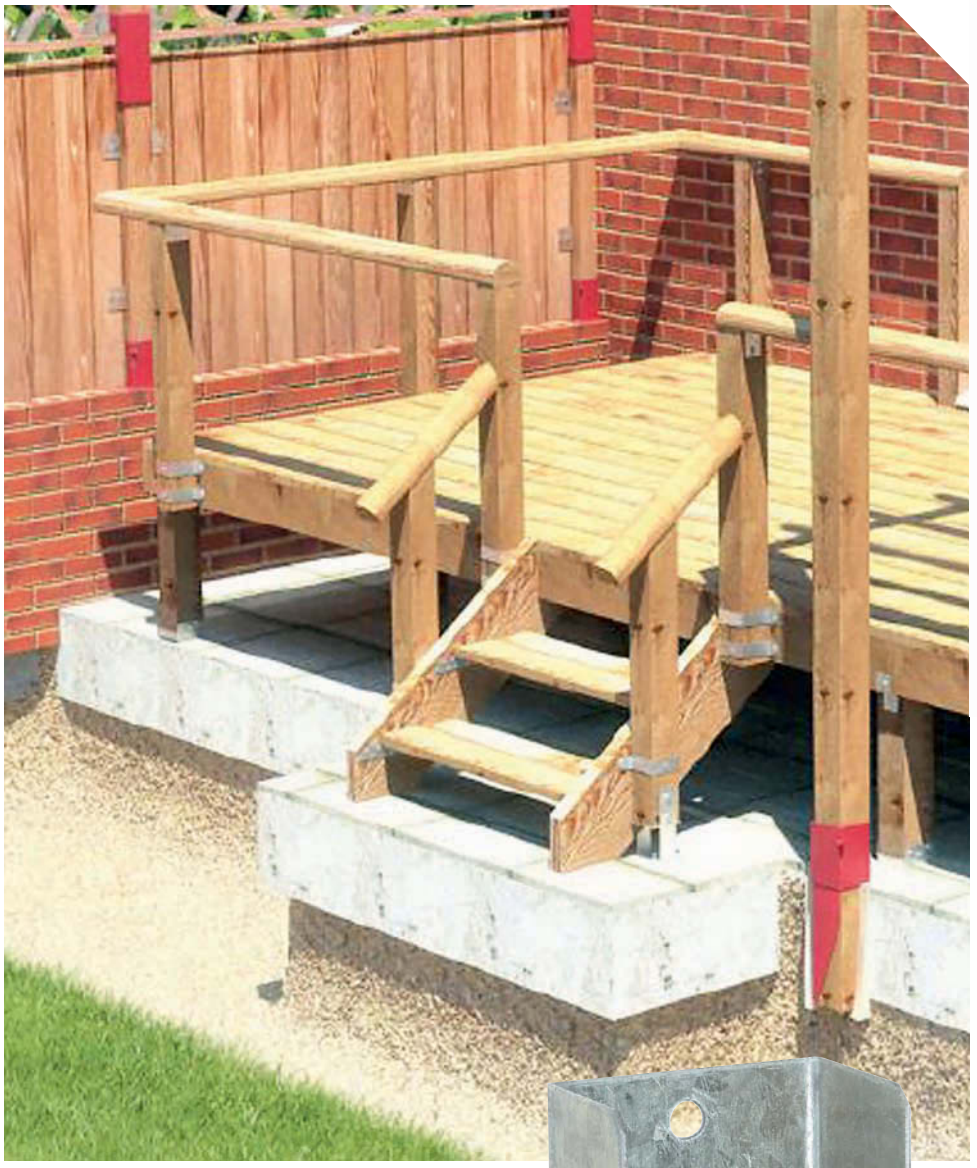

Fence Panel Clip: good quality fence panel clips should be used to attach the wooden panels to the posts

Curved Rail Hinge Clip: Gates that have loose or poor quality hinges may pull away from the fence post

Fence panel clips

To ensure that your fence is well supported and sturdy, good quality fence panel clips should be used to attach the wooden panels to the posts. These are designed to hold the panels in place and are highly recommended to use along with nails. This is because they reduce the risk of nail damage to the timber, and prevent nails from pulling away from the posts. You should opt for galvanised clips as they are coated in a protective layer that will prevent them from rotting. This will again guarantee that your fence is able to withstand wet, windy and difficult conditions over a long period of time.

Treatment

Once the fence has been installed correctly with the right hardware, it is then advisable to treat the wood with a stain or sealant to add to the longevity of the fence. Waterproof sealants will help to prevent the wood from rotting or warping and can easily be brushed over the fence. Usually one application will provide long-term protection. You can also apply water resistant paints or stains to the fence to protect it from water and moisture whilst enhancing the fence's natural finish or changing the colour of the wood completely. This method often requires more maintenance as they may need reapplying after a few years depending on the product that you use and the weather conditions that the fence is subjected to. There are also some products that are both stain and a sealant.

Gates

For fences that have gates attached, these also need to be properly secured so as not to compromise the strength of the fence. Gates that have loose or poor quality hinges may pull away from the fence post and consequently begin to pull parts of the fence with it. The Curved Rail Hinge Kit is an ideal product to use when connecting a gate to a fence post as the heavy duty hook provides a strong fitting with its good fixing points. The manufacturing process involves the hinge being hot-dipped galvanised to ensure its long lasting protection from corrosion. It is recommended for use on a fully framed gate with a curved top ledge.

To keep your fence in good condition for years to come, investing in quality materials and hardware is a must. By taking the time to properly install and maintain your fence, it will have a much better chance of surviving severe weather conditions and general wear-and-tear. On top of this, the fence will look more attractive if it is well cared for and can help to enhance the overall appearance of your garden. It really is worth spending the time and money on your fence to reduce the need for any repairs in the future ■

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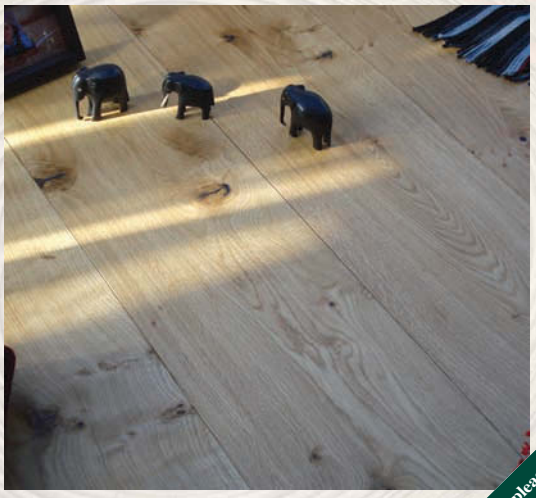

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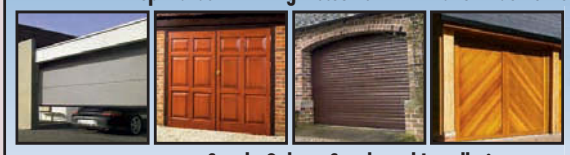

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